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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ENGLISH, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT: NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN

BY

CHERYEL LANE GOODALE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Edmonton, Alberta

FALL, 1992

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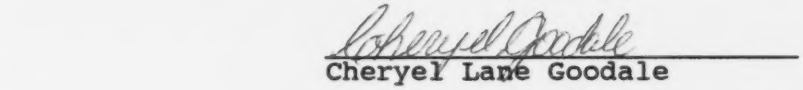

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Dr. G. McConaghy

June 17, 1992

DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to Amy, Bing, Emelia, Karey, Krystyna and Wanda for their enthusiasm and involvement on behalf of immigrant women. It is also dedicated to the people I admire, instructors who offer skill training for employment, and adults who return to the classroom after a long time.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the experiences encountered by immigrant women in their efforts to advance. One specific question was addressed: What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education through a selected office systems training program in a private vocational school. Qualitative methodology was utilized in this study. Data were collected from individual interviews with six immigrant women, and one group interview with four of the six women. School records and interviewer's notes and observations supplemented the quotations from the interviews. Data were reduced by the use of interview guides, transcription, summaries and coding. Data were displayed visually when appropriate and conclusions were drawn and verified. The reflections and opinions of the six immigrant women form the basis of the response to the research question. The immigrant women identified English as the basic need to function and integrate into Canadian society and the prerequisite to education or training and employment. It was found that the immigrant women experienced deterrents: a lack of information, influences of cultural and family values, and homesickness and loss of identity, in meeting their needs to acquire English and Education and to secure Employment. To the immigrant women, perseverence was vital in overcoming the deterrents.

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For all of your time, efforts and professional assistance, Dr. Illot, I am both thankful and grateful. Professor Deane and Dr. McConaghy, I am appreciative of your guidance and support.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem and Its Setting

One of my former colleagues is a founding director of a non-profit private vocational school in the province of Alberta. She so believed in the school's training-for-employment programs that she volunteered her services full-time in the admissions office for fourteen years. Her philosophy lives in the school's mandate to serve the unemployed and underemployed, offering short-term skill training programs that lead to employment - programs targeted at, but not limited to, natives, immigrants, the blind and visually impaired, the deaf and hard of hearing, youth, older workers, and socially or economically disadvantaged adults. Through intake and outgoing interviews with the applicants and graduates, she noticed that a significant number of immigrant women were applying for, entering and graduating from the Office Systems skill training program, and then successfully making the transition to clerical employment. It is to the experiences and perseverance of these immigrant women that I wish to give recognition, that their collective "voice" might make a positive difference for other immigrant women to come.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of the process through which a selected group of immigrant women made the transition to employment. This field study focuses on the problems encountered by immigrant women in their efforts to advance from unemployment to employment in Canada. One specific question is addressed in this thesis: What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education through a selected office systems training program in a private vocational school?

Focus Questions

1. How can the participants be described and what are their general characteristics?
2. What deterrents and motivators did the participants experience as they attempted to make the transition to employment through an office systems training program?
3. What are the participants' employment goals or aspirations?
4. What practical strategies are suggested by the participants, regarding their experiences, to ease the transition to employment for other new immigrant women.

Limitations of the Study

1. The choice of words used in English by the participants may have differed from their choice of words and constructions used in their own language and the subtleties of language may have been lost in the translation.

Assumptions

1. The researcher assumes that the participants in this study were able to accurately recapture and articulate to the researcher, their experiences of making the transition from new immigrant status to employment.
2. The researcher assumes that the participants understood the questions and answered honestly.

Scope of the Study

1. An office systems training program within a private vocational school was selected for the study.
2. The participants selected for this study are immigrant women graduates from the 1988 - 1989 graduating classes of the selected office systems training program.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this study:

1. Deterrents: a generic term describing a dynamic yet not a conclusive force that works "largely in combination with other forces, both positive and negative, in affecting the participation decision" (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, p. 30) to pursue a chosen course of action.
2. Motivators: a generic term describing forces that "arouse, sustain or direct attention" (Cranton, 1989, p. 28), and impel participation (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985, p. 188) towards a certain goal.
3. Perseverance: continued steady belief or efforts, withstanding discouragement or difficulty (Hanks, 1986, p. 1144) in reaching or pursuing a goal.
4. Immigrant Women - a term that describes women from other countries who have come to live in Canada including refugee women (women in Canada, unable to return to their former country of habitation because of well-founded fears of persecution for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership in a political or social group or political opinion) and immigrant women (women who intended to come to Canada to reside permanently).
5. Office Systems Training Program - is "an office systems training program designed to offer individualized hands-on training in a professional

business environment" (JBCI Course Outlines, 1991) to prepare trainees for clerical employment.

Need for the Study

Established immigrant women need the opportunity to share with new immigrant women their successful experiences in making the transition from initial immigration to employment in Canada. An important result of such sharing is the networking or strengthening of the web of contacts and the connections to organizations, educational and training facilities, and funding bodies that exist. Ultimately, a more comfortable and rewarding lifestyle becomes possible, more efficiently and more quickly.

Established immigrant women have experienced both motivators and deterrents in securing training for employment. The goal of adult education "cannot be achieved in the absence of a better understanding of deterrents to participation and the subsequent development of practical strategies to combat these deterrents" and therefore "increase participation in organized educational activities for adults" (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985, p. 188). Knowles confirms this need in his interview with Whelan (1988) when he suggests that graduates of a program meet with applicants of the program prior to registration because the graduates "tend to be more convincing than

professors" as "resource people to explain from their own life experience the value of studying" (p. 4).

Das Gupta (1987) discusses the importance of using Canadian immigrant women as "subjects" of studies rather than "objects" of studies (p. 14) and emphasizes the need to look at "immigrant women in the community who are working, organizing and formulating alternative structures, relations and ideas to bring changes in their lives" (p. 14). *Learning From Our History: Community Development by Immigrant Women in Ontario (1985-86)* was written by established immigrant women in response to the need for a resource book for new immigrant women. It focused on the idea of using a "web" network for immigrant women to "spin" - to leave behind resources for other immigrant women to add to (Das Gupta, 1987, p. 15).

Das Gupta (1987) is adamant that although "participatory research . . . requires incredible energy, creativity and commitment - not to mention time," its value and insight for the community is necessary and worthwhile (p. 16). Qualitative research findings are valued because the data "have a certain undeniability [sic] . . . that is often far more convincing to a reader than pages of numbers" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 23).

Women - who are unemployed or underemployed, who make up the majority of participants in adult education, and who are immigrants - need help now! In providing help, we must

recognize, value and utilize "the creativity, energy and experience" of women or "half of the world's human potential will be wasted" (Yarmol-Franko, 1988, p. 4).

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

To provide a background to the study four areas important to the study - adult education, women in adult education, immigrant women, and methodology - were the focus of the literature review. The review process was designed to meet several objectives: to establish the need to conduct the study in each area and describe the research problems, to show how adult education, women in adult education, and immigrant women are interrelated; and to examine qualitative research methodology.

Adult Education

Goals of Adult Education

In 1794, the London Corresponding Society published an article supporting the need for people to be involved in adult education. "Instruction is the want of all," and "society ought to favour with all its powers the progress of human reason, and to place instruction within the reach of every citizen" (Simon, 1990, p. 9). The Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE) in 1946 supported the 1794 publication: "The adult education movement is based on the belief that quite ordinary men and women have within themselves and their communities the spiritual and intellectual resources adequate to the solution of their

problem" (Cassidy & Faris, 1987, p. 36). Confirming the 1946 mandate of adult education, The Canadian Association of Adult Education in 1986 declared:

> Canadians can shape their cultural, economic, political and social destiny . . . . As members of communities and of broader social movements, adult educators must join with, and learn from, all those Canadians who seek full citizenship, personal growth, and social betterment. Canadian adult educators must strengthen their historic role of working within communities to create environmentally sound, sustainable local economic development. By fostering co-operative working and learning relationships, adult educators can assist Canadians to prepare more effectively for the future. (Cassidy & Faris, 1987, p. 4)

The 1794 London Corresponding Society publication looked to society, the CAAE in 1946 looked within men and women themselves, and the CAAE in 1986 looked to citizens and educators within a cooperative movement to make adult education accessible to anyone looking for a more effective future.

Brindley (1988) interviewed Dr. Allen Tough, a professor of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and asked him about the accessibility of adult education. Tough stated that many adult learners figure out what their own needs are, how they are going to

gain the knowledge or skill they seek, and overcome frustrations and obstacles to get there; but many do not. Adult educators and researchers need to remember those who do not - those who do not overcome the obstacles themselves. Educators need to ask what were the motivators and what were the deterrents (p. 10).

Motivators to Participation

Many researchers have studied motivators in adult education and Boshier and Collins (1985) state, "The interest in motivational orientations stems from the almost universal desire to tailor program content and processes to the needs, motives and interests of learners" (p. 113). Adult motivation researchers Williams and Heath compiled a list of motives in 1936 that applied to participants in adult education; however, these motives were not linked to a theoretical framework. In 1961, Houle organized adult education motivation factors into a typology. From interviews with 22 participants in continuing education in the Chicago area, Houle classified the typology into three types of learners: those who are goal-oriented, those who are activity-oriented, and those who are learning-oriented. Because each type was not pure, Houle represented the types pictorially as three overlapping circles (p. 114).

From a list of 58 motivation reasons given by adults participating in adult education, Sheffield (1962, 1964) compiled a likert-based questionnaire, administered it to

453 adults in 20 continuing education conferences and, through factor analysis, identified five factors. Using a questionnaire administered to 1046 subjects in metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri, Burgess (1971) identified 15 factors. Boshier noted that although Sheffield and Burgess suggested that their factors were representative of Houle's typology, the researchers were not too concerned that the fit was somewhat imperfect. Thus their studies moved toward the relationships between orientation scores and other variables (p. 115).

Boshier (1971) developed a 48 item Education Participation Scale (EPS) from interviews with participants, and from studying Houle's *The Inquiring Mind* and Sheffield's (1964) and Burgess' (1971) work. The 48 EPS items were administered to 233 participants sampled at random from the population of 2436 adults enrolled at Victoria University and from the Workers' Educational Association in New Zealand to test how the data "fit" Houle's typology. The EPS was condensed in 1977 to 40 items and was administered to thousands of participants around the globe; data was amalgamated and cluster analyzed against the Houle typology. Goal and learning orientations "fit" Houle's typology and activity orientation was expanded to include Social Stimulation, Social Contact, External Expectations and Community Service. "The EPS was developed in 1969, aired in *Adult Education* two years later

(Boshier, 1971), refined in Canada (Boshier, 1977), and is now published commercially (Boshier, 1982)" (Boshier & Collins, 1985, pp. 116, 117).

Deterrents to Participation

Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) credit researchers Houle (1961), Sheffield (1964), Burgess (1971), Boshier (1971), and others with the contribution of descriptions of adult learner "types," "motives" or "motivational orientations." However, they state that attention must be drawn to deterrents of participating in adult education that are analogous to the motivating factors that impel participation.

Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) developed a Deterrent to Participation scale that was administered to a large random sample of professionals in the health field in New Jersey. The study revealed these deterrents: Disengagement (inertia, apathy, negative attitudes), Lack of Quality, Family Constraints, Cost, Lack of Benefit (doubt about the worth and need) and Work Constraints. Although the study could not be generalized to the adult population, the study was significant in that deterrents were identified and factors contributed to participation behavior (pp. 155, 156).

Addressing the limitations of Scanlan and Darkenwald's (1984) study, Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) revised the Deterrents to Participation Scale to make them applicable

to the general adult population and administered the scale to a random selection of households. These factors emerged: Lack of Confidence, Lack of Course Relevance, Time Constraints, Low Personal Priority, Cost and Personal Problems (p. 177). Martindale and Drake (1989) used the Deterrents to Participation Scale in their study and confirmed its validity using an Air Force enlisted personnel population that "measured the same deterrents" identified by Darkenwald and Valentine (1985).

Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) used the same data base employed in their 1985 study to develop a typology of deterrents to participation for adult learners in an attempt to understand "the extent to which different types of potential learners experience these forces" (Valentine and Darkenwald, 1990, p. 30). Five types of people were identified: Type One - Personal Problems Deterrent - traditional women homemakers with demanding life situations (family, childcare, health, handicaps); Type Two - Lack of Confidence Deterrent - mature people, disproportionately male, with low educational level, low employment rate and distributed income, who lack confidence but are otherwise in a position to participate; Type Three - Costs Deterrent - young women with confidence, low educational level, part-time employment history who cannot afford costs of programs; Type Four - No Interest in Organized Education - affluent, working males with high educational levels but

little interest in organized courses; Type Five - Not Interested in Available Courses - well educated, mid-income, employed males who value continuing education but find no courses that are appealing (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, pp. 36-38).

Historically, research on participation in adult education has been with motivations. More recently, however, research has been on deterrents because, as Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) point out, "motivational orientation factors have not proved useful in distinguishing participants from nonparticipants" (p. 155). Research needs to look at deterrents. Recently the term deterrents has replaced the term barriers as "barrier connotes an absolute blockage, a static and insurmountable obstacle that prevents an otherwise willing adult from participating in adult education" whereas deterrents "suggest a more dynamic and less conclusive force, one that works largely in combination with other forces, both positive and negative, in affecting the participation decision" (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, p. 30).

Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) concur that a "decision not to participate in organized adult education is typically due to the combined or synergistic effects of multiple deterrents, rather than just one or two in isolation" (p. 31). Research has not invalidated early studies but has led to the refinement and elaboration of

typologies, and the descriptions (definitions) of motivations and deterrents to participation in adult education.

Need for Study in Adult Education

In the planning stages of adult education, the focus is on removing forces that deter participation (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990, p. 29). Thus, the goal of adult education "cannot be achieved in the absence of a better understanding of deterrents to participation and the subsequent development of practical strategies to combat these deterrents and increase participation in organized educational activities for adults" (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985, p. 188). Researchers need to "investigate the impact of initial orientations on the behavior and learning of adult education participants in a variety of settings" (Boshier & Collins, 1985, p. 128). "Research is needed for other populations, especially the general adult public and hard-to-reach subgroups" (Scanlan & Darkenwald, 1984, p. 165).

Women in Adult Education

Television shows are recognizing women who are participating in adult education programs, either registering in a course or teaching a course. "Virtually every woman portrayed as a mother and a wife, and sometimes a career woman, was taking off for a course . . . either

teaching one or taking one . . . interesting that by the time this kind of family life style appears on television, it really has become a part of the fabric of society" (Cross, 1988, p. 13).

Bridging Programs

Bridging programs for women recognize deterrents to adult education and specific learning needs of women. Bridging programs are designed for all women but targeted at women who are physically challenged, native, reentering the workforce, under-employed, women whose career has been interrupted by technology change, young women who have not made the transition to employment, single parents and those recovering from abusive situations. The programs recognize the need for financial assistance, child care, transportation, course scheduling, and the need to redefine the "outdated cultural mores which do not recognize women's right to have both a career and family life" (Ariano, 1988, p. 45).

Carol Powell Ariano assisted in the initiation of the 1985 Bridging Program for Women. The mandate of the Bridging Program for Women was to provide support services, appropriate program components and on-going evaluation. The 1985 Bridging Program handbook explains:

> Provide the necessary support services to enable women to overcome barriers to successful participation in education, training and employment including

counselling, group experience with other women, development of support groups, flexible scheduling, financial support, appropriate referral to other agencies as required, follow-up after completing the program, advocacy for individual women in the program and women students in general.

Provide the appropriate program components to enable women to gain access to education, training and employment including: assessment of current interests and learning needs; vocational planning courses; academic upgrading, pre-trades, pre-technology; job readiness training; job finding club (a supportive program of job search); work placement and on-the-job training; entrepreneurial business skills course; other special interest courses.

Provide on-going evaluation of the program to ensure that it is flexible and innovative in meeting the needs of participants and the community. (Ariano, 1988, p. 47)

The program's modules include Orientation, Vocational Planning, Learning Centre, Employment Modules, Entrepreneurial Business Skills, Special Interest Courses, Support Aspects and Counselling, Financial Support, Child Care, Scheduling, Location, Advocacy, Follow-up and Sharing of Women's Experiences.

Women are invited to an information session which orients them to the program. This is followed by career planning sessions scheduled at the women's convenience to develop short and long term goals necessary for entering education, training or employment. A career support group is established at this time. Women have the opportunity to update their academic skills in a learning centre by working on correspondence courses or working with remedial instructors for assistance in refining their skills. A work experience component and job search skills are also offered, components that would be beneficial in securing a current work reference. Entrepreneurial training is explored as an excellent source of paid work for those not wanting to relinquish family and personal time at home. Specialized courses such as life skills and computer courses are offered at a reduced rate accessible by unemployed women. The support aspects of the Bridging Program are what makes it unique: financial assistance, flexibility, and professional counselling. Women also support one another. "As women learn that many aspects of their personal experience are mirrored in the lives of other women they develop courage and strength to assist one another to reach goals" (Ariano, 1988, p. 49).

Women are in need now of the support services offered by bridging programs.

> Two out of three people who cannot read or write in the world are women. It is estimated that women are responsible, on their own, for the support and care of about 75 percent of the world's children. Women receive only one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one percent of all property. In every country in the world, the work that women do is either not paid or paid less, regardless of what that work is. Women produce at least half of the world's food. Women and children constitute 90 percent of all refugees in the world. In many parts of the world, women are the majority of adult students - about two-thirds in many areas. Although the lives of women around the world are affected by different social, cultural, religious, and political factors, these facts show they have many struggles in common. (Yarmol-Franko, 1988, p. 3)

Immigrant Women

Although the Bridging Program for Women did not identify immigrant women in Canada in its target population, immigrant women are faced with at least as many deterrents and learning needs in seeking a career as other Canadian women. Immigrant women are often faced with the additional need to acquire English skills. The immigrant women need information on career development and career

opportunities and must receive both financial and moral support to enter programs and become employable. Canadian training and/or work experience credentials would prove valuable in making the transition to employment. Immigrant women also need to support one another as they reach for their goals.

Deterrents to Adult Education

The Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Employment and Immigration and Minister of State Responsible for the Status of Women, acknowledged in the report, *The Immigrant Woman in Canada: A Right to Recognition* (1981), that Canadian-born women face significant deterrents "balancing the often-conflicting demands of homemaking, motherhood," with a paying job or education. He also acknowledged that in addition to these deterrents, immigrant women also have to "learn a new language and adjust to a different culture" (p. 25). Immigrant women need to acquire language to participate in their children's lives (interaction with schools, extra-curricular activities, communication with other mothers, doctors, or government agencies) and to integrate into the community (to navigate in the community and to shop). Once integrated into the community, immigrant women need language in order to participate in skill training or to upgrade their qualifications to join the labour force (p. 26). Language must be acquired to give immigrant women the same rights to employment,

education and support services as other women in our society.

Gilbert (1990) recognizes that immigrant people need to acquire language, to understand others and to be understood. P. Kayne (personal communication, August 1991) supports Gilbert's (1990) practical approach of teaching English pronunciation in context which in turn helps the listener understand the meaning (p. 2), an approach "obviously necessary [yet] so little concentrated upon" (p. xi). Gilbert's (1990) practical approach includes intonation to help speakers group words Alfred said, "The boss is stupid." [or] "Alfred," said the boss, "is stupid" (p. 2); stress to help speakers make syllables absolutely clear to listeners techNOlogy [or] technoLOgical (p. 24); and English rhythm Where did you go? or Wherejago? Gilbert stresses the importance of learning pronunciation to enhance listening comprehension and speaking skills. Gilbert (1990) quoted an immigrant graduate who said success in education hinges on the ability to communicate in English and that "difficulties are in inverse proportion to our strength in English" (p. 2).

The Hon. Jim Fleming, Minister of State for Multiculturalism (1981), identified women immigrants in the report, *The Immigrant Woman in Canada: A Right to Recognition (1981)* as being over-represented in low paying jobs and over-represented in the service industry. The

immigrant women are needed in the middle-income secretarial and clerical areas. Fleming asked for specific programs to encourage and integrate women immigrants from low paying jobs into the middle-income clerical area. Although the technical and professional segment is well represented by immigrant women, the associations need to redefine their credential recognition and requalifying programs to include the pre-Canadian qualifications of immigrant women (p. 23).

MacDonald (1990) feels that mutual assistance associations are needed to aid refugees in their adjustment to self-sufficiency through employment (p. 71). MacDonald identifies refugees' needs in the area of child care, language acquisition, learning the economic system, safety on the job, transportation and geography, professional recertification, need for vocational retraining, and need to learn job search skills. MacDonald points out that the instructors are in the best position to advise employers of the student's abilities. He also stated that refugees need to accept entry-level positions in order to establish a work history and references while paying the bills of today and focusing toward a long range goal of a higher level job (p. 78).

The close of 1990 left a backlog of tens of thousands of refugee claimants stuck in the Canadian immigration process seeking a landed immigrant status - many stuck in

the system for years. From the 1990 backlog of claimants and expected tens of thousands of new refugee claimants in 1991, it is evident that the immigration process is in need of a laxative to speed up the process of dealing with the claimants seeking landed immigrant status.

Toronto lawyer Barbara Jackman argued in the Federal Court of Canada that refugees are "denied their Charter rights to a fair hearing and to security of the person" by "unreasonable delays of two or more years for their cases to be resolved" (McLaren, 1991 February 26, p. A4). Should the court favor the denial, Ottawa could be backed into a position to offer amnesty to those refugees in the backlog. However, 60,000 refugees were left "mired in delays" despite the 1989 New Refugee Status Determination Process to reduce the backlog (McLaren, 1991 February 26, p. A4).

Canadian Woman Studies dedicated their Spring 1989 issue to refugee women. The term "women refugees" conjures up images that these women have never been anything else but refugees. In one article, Moussa (1988) wants to dispel this image and have people see women refugees for what they "are" and for what they "were" in both the host country's culture and in their own culture. Culture is often referred to as a point of view.

> Culture is an intricate web of verbal and non-verbal language systems; the social, economic and political institutions and their infrastructure; the customs and

> traditions; the ecological and architectural characteristics of a country or community; and the history of a people. Gender relations are interwoven in all of the facets of culture. Culture is what influences the way women, men and children think, feel, act and interact. Culture is the way people express themselves, the way they move and the way they solve problems. Culture determines what people consider as important, what they value and what they do not value. We sometimes call this our world view. (p. 16)

Immigrant women's views are different from our Canadian world view and we must recognize there is value in their past and in their culture. Women refugees are uprooted from their culture and submerged in ours. Adjustments must be made by both the host society and the women refugees. Successful adjustment depends on the refugee women's "readiness and ability to adjust, as well as the host country's openness to change the barriers it places on cultural differences" (p. 16). It is an opportunity for women to learn from the richness of each other's cultural backgrounds. "The strength of refugee women; their ability to change and to influence; their resilience and profound commitment to protecting their most deeply-held values--these traits dominated and gave much hope" (p. 22) to making the cultural adjustment.

The YWCA aims at "helping refugee women to help themselves" (Gibaut, 1988, p. 87). Recognizing problems and deterrents, the YWCA provides a day-to-day safe haven to refugee women and their children and offers support, counsel and programs. The following is an outline of YWCA programs.

> The programs include multicultural, educational and language training; communication and leadership programs to enable women to participate actively in the communities in which they live; work in refugee camps; counselling and information services; legal advice and assistance; child care programs; income generating and training activities; and housing .... The YWCA also acts as a pressure group, often with other organizations, to urge governments to adopt just and compassionate refugee legislation. (p. 87)

Marsick (1990) identifies the need to reach out in partnerships. Partnerships or joint ventures need to provide services and opportunities to people in transition, people who are "disadvantaged or disenfranchised for many reasons; they may be victims of torture or domestic violence, homeless or immigrants" and need immediate "legal aid, social services, education, training, and job placement" (p. 51). This collaboration would encourage participation among people in transition, agencies, educational organizations and businesses, and build a

learning and human service community to overcome language, culture, immigration procedures, employment and education deterrents.

Need for Study of Immigrant Women

Women make up seventy-five percent of the world's refugees (Lee, 1988, p. 52). Understanding the plight of these refugee women is a step toward helping them with integration, education and employment. "Collecting data on the adjustment issues of refugee women and identifying the facilitating and hindering factors in their resettlement process should be a priority in research and program delivery" (Lee, 1988, p. 54).

The English at the Workplace Program (EWP) was set up by the Metro Labour Education & Skills Training Center, a project of the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto, to deal with the literacy needs of immigrant women in the workplace. "Inspired by educational campaigns like the Nicaraguan literacy crusade and the work of Paulo Freire, the philosophy of the Program emphasized the need to develop worker/participants' critical consciousness of their work situation, their society and position in it, and ways of effecting changes through action, through participation in their union" (Agarwal, 1987, p. 41). The EWP is now expanding to train workers to be EWP instructors for a "bridging program in which bilingual instructors will be able to provide the additional support and pre-basic

functional ESL training" demonstrating a "collective strength" which empowers all immigrants and refugees (Agarwal, 1987, p. 42).

Skill shortages in the clerical fields that need to recruit immigrant women parallel the skill shortages in the apprenticeship programs that need to recruit youth. Referring to a study of youth in transition, Dr. John Walsh from the University of Guelph stated that young people are needed to enter skilled trades and the need must be communicated to the youth through people already in the trades "to harness the advocacy potential of people already in skilled trade occupations as a promotional vehicle" (Walsh, 1989, p. 24). Like the youth who are needed in trades, women immigrants are needed in middle-income clerical careers to meet the skill shortages. Like the youth who need to "hear it" from journeymen in the trades, new women immigrants need to be "beckoned to" by women immigrants who have made the transition to clerical employment (Walsh, 1989, p. 24).

Need for Immigrants

Larry Hill, an economist of Employment and Immigration Canada was quoted in *Canadian News Facts* (1990), with reference to a need for immigrants in Canada. "Canada needs more immigrants to overcome the country's declining population and acute labor shortages in certain fields" and "right now, the public is anti-immigration, but it is vital

to Canada's economic survival in the next century" (p. 3994). A predicted labour shortage of young people demands that Canada attract the "highly educated and skilled immigrant people" (p. 3994).

Akbari, a landed immigrant from Pakistan, and Assistant Professor of Economics at St. Mary's University defends the cost effectiveness of immigrants in *Canadian News Facts* (1990) saying that immigrants take less from the government than the government pays out which makes immigrants a viable investment. "Because most immigrants are younger than non-immigrants and at an earlier stage of their working lives, they do not use health-care services extensively yet pay hefty taxes," Akbari explained (p. 4121).

"Young Canadians are losing interest in living together, women aren't having enough babies to replace the population and the country's future growth will depend increasingly on immigration . . . concludes a Statistics Canada study released April 9," (*Canadian News Facts*, 1990 p. 4171).

Immigrant Women in Business

In the report, *The Immigrant Woman in Canada: A Right to Recognition (1981)*, the Hon. Jim Fleming (1981) identified Canada's need for women immigrants, and the need for these people to work in the middle-income secretarial

and clerical areas to meet the demand in the business labor market (p. 23).

A number of events occurring world wide are affecting the way people who operate businesses view immigration. The new European common market, the 1997 Hong Kong takeover by China, proposed free trade in North America, and the worldwide awakening during the Persian Gulf crisis "Desert Storm" have all worked to open "sharp business minds to view global economics more creatively" with the "regional geography of the past being replaced by the global geography of the present" (La Rosa, 1990 p. 35).

Challenging opportunities will surface in business for those who understand foreign markets and who are prepared to respond quickly. In "The Age of Indifference," La Rosa (1990) states that those who understand foreign markets are not North Americans. Those whose "native language is not English were more aware of international events; national news personalities; and the concepts of glasnost, perestroika, and capitalism"; further, "immigrants who want to become American citizens are required to know more about American history than are native-born Americans" (p. 35).

"Educators in all fields, but particularly in business, must recognize that although they represent only one cog in a large wheel, their singular efforts enhance the synergistic movement of that wheel" (La Rosa, 1990, p. 36). Business educators must recognize that immigrants

are needed in increasing numbers to meet the needs of the marketplace. "Global education is an enormous wheel, but educators can collectively make it turn" (La Rosa 1990 p. 36).

Morrison and Morrison (1991) endorse the philosophy that business educators should not ignore the problems of integration or sell the North American version of culture as the only culture but, instead, should recognize cultural differences both in the global market and in the multicultural market at home. Business communications strategies must allow for 20,000 different cultures in the world and must be sensitive to hand gestures, facial expressions, interpersonal distance, eye contact, speech rate, pauses, symbolism, and subtleties (p. 143). In verbal communication, 60% is the non-verbal gestures, 30% is how we speak (speech rate, pauses, etc.) and only 10% is the words themselves which demonstrate the room for error and disadvantage immigrants have when they do not understand many of the non-verbals and when their speech is distorted by their accent (P. Kayne, personal communication, August 1991). "Speech and gesticulation must be synchronized" for communication to take place with "speech calling the tune, and movement dancing to it" (Morrison & Morrison, 1991, p. 143). Also, communication must be sensitive to cultural differences in walking and touching behavior, values, laws, religions, politics,

gender identity, and business etiquette. Morrison and Morrison (1991) endorse attribution learning as a means to intercultural business communication; what better way to discuss cultural differences than with people from other cultures integrated into the classroom (Morrison & Morrison, 1991, p. 141).

Methodology

Qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology to gather descriptive data using words rather than numbers. Qualitative methodology is suited to studies that are looking for "individualized outcomes," "understanding of internal dynamics of programs," "case studies," "unique qualities," or "descriptive details of programs," through "natural observation," open-ended interviews," or "site visits" (Patton, 1980, p. 89).

Miles and Huberman (1984) recognize that the collection of qualitative data is labor-intensive, the amount of data collected can be astronomical, and bring to the forefront the lack of conventions for reporting the results of a qualitative study. Miles and Huberman (1984) provide a flow model or guide to the qualitative methodology (p. 23) with emphasis on practical approaches including an audit trail throughout data collection, analysis and interpretation (p. 15).

Data Collection

Data are collected through observations, interviews, and extraction of information from documents, and assembled through transcription.

Data Reduction

Data are reduced by the process of transforming or breaking down qualitative data through transcription, summaries, converting of words to numbers or ranks, simplifying or by abstracting (p. 23). Data reduction involves: (1) the transcription of data from meetings or interviews and subsequent summary of participant's quotations from the transcription notes; (2) coding schemes to break down the data; (3) memo writing to record conceptual looks at aspects of data; (4) analysis to look for main themes; and (5) summaries to record what is known and what needs to be pursued (p. 25).

Data Display

Data are displayed to meet the demands of qualitative report readers to "verify, disconfirm, or illuminate the conclusions offered" (p. 26). Data display involves the use of figures, graphs or matrices when appropriate. Descriptive figures include charts to depict relationships, growth gradients to show increases over time, explanatory figures to depict two variables and event state flow charts to assemble key events. Descriptive matrices display checklists for single variables, time-ordered phenomena,

and concept clusters to bring together theoretical variables. Explanatory matrices display effects of a process, site dynamics to measure change in a setting, process-outcome to trace outcomes, or event listing (p. 26).

Conclusions and Verification

Conclusions are the extracted meanings from data and from displays and are tested for plausibility and validity. From the beginning the qualitative researcher must refrain from making conclusions and must maintain an open and sceptical view. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest noting patterns or themes, seeing plausibility and clustering, making metaphors, splitting variables, looking for subsumed particulars into the general, factoring, noting relations between variables, finding intervening variables, building a logical chain of evidence and making conceptual coherence (p. 27).

The data and displays must support the conclusions. Representativeness can be kept in check by increasing the number of cases, looking for contrasts, and random sampling within the population and phenomena of study. Other verification tactics include checking for researcher effects on site, triangulating across data sources, evaluating which data is most trustworthy, making contrasts and comparisons, checking the meaning of outliers, and getting feedback from informants. A log book of data

collection, data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification should be maintained throughout the study (p. 28).

Data reduction, data display and conclusions are "interwoven before, during and after data collection" (p. 24).

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative researchers must be aware that "overly rigorous approaches can lead to rigor mortis . . . too easily confirmable but inane analyses" (p. 28). Miles and Huberman (1984) offer these words of wisdom from their experience in qualitative studies: keep your sense of humor and keep your wits about you, trust your personal visions, use your creativity in design of display, and share the results with colleagues (p. 28).

Feminist Perspective

"Qualitative research strives to make people both 'visible' and 'audible'" (Payne, 1990, p. 86) and supports the "feminist perspective in seeking to understand the world as women see it from their position in a patriarchal society" (Campbell, 1990, p. 44). The feminist researcher's work is "introspective, reflective, intuitive, and depends on the subjective starting point of women as authors of their own stories (DuBois, 1983, Malmo, 1983)" (Campbell, 1990, p. 35). Warren's (1987) question, "Why cannot our current theories, research tools, and

methodologies uncover the educational and learning needs of women?" (p. 126) may be answered in part by Dubois (1983): "when distorted conceptions of reality are the grounds of science, the distorted perceptions of reality will be the fruits of science. The androcentric perspective of social science has rendered women not only unknown but unknowable" (p. 107). Campbell (1990) answers in part "we need to begin the process of uncovering meaning for women by considering the feminist perspective and by doing so, we may be better able to provide answers to Warren's question" (p. 43).

> Much of the social science research has been done using men as subjects and then extrapolating results to describe both male and female populations. Feminist research, first and foremost, is concerned with telling the other half of the story - the women's half. It is political in nature and aims to illuminate sexist and oppressive structures in society. By doing so, it hopes to point the way to conditions where gender is not the criteria or barrier to full and equal society participation. (Campbell, 1990, p. 43)

Similarly, Jane Hugo (1990) argues that "women's invisibility in adult education history," (p. 1) is due to male-dominated perspectives of male experiences in adult education. She alerts us to the value of women's

qualitative research that might shed a new light on issues including urbanization and immigration and the need for the feminist perspective to alter adult education "his-story" to "her-story" (p. 12).

Summary

Adult education documented in 1794 its aim to "place instruction within the reach of every citizen" (Simon, 1990, p. 9), and adult education today aims to make education accessible to anyone looking for a more effective future by a cooperative movement between citizens and educators. Lynch (1986) confirms the need to open communication and seek opinions from graduates to evaluate the effectiveness of programs to balance what is offered and how it's offered to what is required. Adult education must strive for balance - quality that is too high or tuition that is too high (unattainable standards) may result in no response or low enrollment. Boshier and Collins (1985) concur with Lynch that the goal of adult education is a "universal desire to tailor program content and processes to the needs, motives and interests of learners" (p. 113).

Women make up the largest portion of students in adult education and adult educators must recognize the deterrents women face to enter programs. They must redefine the "outdated cultural mores which do not recognize women's

right to have both a career and family life" (Ariano, 1988, p. 45). Women need the opportunity to learn from other women's personal experiences to gain courage and strength from each other (Ariano, 1988, p. 49).

In addition to the deterrents faced by women in adult education, immigrant women experience a language deficit, a need to adjust to the culture, and often a need to handle immigration delays. Information regarding the acquisition of language, cultural adjustments, and transition to employment should be a "priority in research and program delivery" (Lee, 1988, p. 54).

The common element that appears to link these authors is their concern to overcome the deterrents that prevent a movement closer to cultural understanding and to promote a system that encourages participation of the target population. The authors recognize that immigrant women often do not get to use what they rightfully own - their own expertise and their need to become economically self-sufficient through employment. The authors concur that the voice of immigrant women should reach and influence others. In a crowd of people, two immigrant women from the same country will feel like a family.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Educational Research, Methodology, and Measurement: An International Handbook, (1988) edited by John P. Keeves supports and references (p. 514) Miles and Huberman's *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods,* (1984) in presenting an up-to-date overview of qualitative research methods and data analysis. Miles and Huberman (1984) call for minimal reporting strategies documenting movement from data collection through to analysis and interpretation (p. 22) to give future researchers opportunity to come to conclusions within the same general "truth space" (p. 22) if faced with the same data; and recommend that researchers "look behind the structure to see what will be useful in their own work" (p. 21).

The methodology chosen for this study was drawn from Miles and Huberman's minimal set of qualitative reporting functions as well as from Michael Quinn Patton's *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* (1980) resource book.

Focusing

The statement of the problem and need for the qualitative research study was developed to focus on or identify key factors or variables and presumed relationships to be studied (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.

28). A qualitative approach was selected to examine the key factors, the variables or the presumed relationships in detail and to capture the participants' expressions as they related their experiences and opinions.

Assumptions and limitations were set out to identify who and what would and would not be studied. Focus or researchable questions were drawn from the conceptual framework which focused, limited, and lined up sampling and data collection (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 34).

Choosing the Sample

The sample group was narrowed by the conceptual framework and focus questions. Informants who were seen as most important and representative of the study were selected. Sampling also took time constraints into consideration (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 34).

Written permission was obtained from the selected private vocational school to access graduates' files. Suitable participants were selected if they were graduates from the 1988 - 1989 office systems program, if they were women, if they were immigrants and if they were either employed or furthering their education.

Protection of the Participants

The prospective participants were contacted by letter to request their participation in the study. The letter

guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality by suggesting the use of pseudonyms, the exclusion of participants' names and addresses, the exclusion of associated names and addresses identified in the study, and by the exclusion of the name and address of the private vocational program. Participants were advised that they had the right to withdraw from the study at their request. The letter was followed by a telephone call from the researcher, explaining the study and confirming participation. A release of information form was signed by both the participant and the researcher. One copy was given to the participant and one to the researcher. The release of information form gave the researcher access to the participant's school records and included statements which guaranteed steps would be taken to keep the participant's identity anonymous.

Data Sources

Data sources included the collection of data from school records, observations and interviews. Interviews were conducted with each participant on an individual basis, and one interview was conducted in a group situation with four of the six participants. Two of the participants, for personal reasons, were unable to attend the group interview.

Interview guides and open-ended interview approaches were used to provide openings to specific subject areas for discussion, which made the best use of both the interviewer and participant's time, kept the interview focused with opportunity for views to emerge, avoided different questions for different people, yet kept the interview informal, conversational and informative (Patton, 1980, p. 205). Questions were structured in an open-ended, singular, clear format to avoid the yes/no one-word response and to encourage participants to elaborate in their own way (p. 214) and to give historical context similar to private jokes where "you had to have been there." Presupposition questions that occur in everyday language were used to the interviewer's advantage in eliciting responses to uncomfortable questions. An example of one uncomfortable question was in a situation where the interviewer asked about English as a second language. The question of "Can you read English?" might have elicited an admittance of illiteracy; whereas the presupposition question of "How many ESL courses have you been registered in?" suggested the need for ESL to be a normal expectation and focused on the frequency of occurrence rather than the event. By presupposing that participants in this study possess a wealth of experience, the "quality of the descriptions received was likely to be enhanced" (Patton, 1980, p. 222). To move participants to disclose their own

experiences, questions of simulation were posed such as "Suppose I was a refugee who just arrived in Edmonton, and I asked you what I should do to obtain training. What would you tell me?" (Patton, 1980, p. 234). Comments regarding the questions were used as a lead-in to the question giving the participant a few minutes to think. Probing questions for clarification and elaboration were used as well as head nods and verbal cues to reinforce the participant and suggest that the interview was going well.

A camcorder and tape recorder were used to record interviews. Transcripts were prepared from the video tapes, audio tapes and field notes. Participants were advised that the interviewer took brief notes and that the camcorder and tape recorder were used for reference and transcripts. The participants were advised of the confidentiality of the tapes. Participants were also advised that at any time during the interview, the participant could request that comments be taken "off the record," and that at any time the participant could request that the camcorder or tape recorder be stopped and the equipment would be shut off.

Pilot

The interview guides were piloted by pilot participants, representative of the participants selected. The camcorder operator completed a pilot run to ensure that

the instrument was an effective tool for data collection. The pilot participants were debriefed and asked for input regarding the pilot run. The pilot examined wording, sequencing, necessity of questions, timeline, bias in questions, and problems with ethnic, regional or linguistic differences. The intention of the pilot run was to increase the efficiency of the interviewer and the appropriateness of the data capture.

Data Collection

Demographic and other relevant data were collected from school records. Demographic data not available in school records and specific topic data were collected from the first interview.

Data, in the form of quotations, notes and observations, relevant to the research questions, were gathered from personal interviews to gain knowledge of the individual's perspectives and experiences. The interviews were scheduled in the late afternoons during the week or on Saturdays, and each interview lasted close to two hours. Three interviews were conducted in the home of the participants, two in the interviewer's home and one in a restaurant. The researcher contacted participants after each personal interview to "explore new leads and address any revised research questions" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 46) which allowed for expansion of topics.

The group interview drew four participants together to discuss commonalities and differences. The participants who could not attend stated that they wanted to participate but were unable to attend due to personal commitments. The group served "as 'secondary interviewers,' probing answers and asking for clarification of each other. In this way, the interaction of the group enhanced the data both qualitatively, by their input and quantitatively, by their elaboration" (Campbell, 1990, p. 56). The group interview lasted four hours and took place in a private meeting room in a restaurant on a Saturday afternoon.

Interviewer

The author assumed the role of researcher, observer, interviewer, and recorder. Miles and Huberman (1984) support the combined role in consideration of a person who is familiar with the "phenomenon and setting under the study" (p. 46).

Treatment of Data During Data Collection

An interview guide was used to keep the discussion on topic and a space was provided for rough notes. The camcorder and audio tape were used to back up the data collection. The data collected in the form of tapes, notes and original verbatim transcripts were kept locked in a fireproof filing cabinet for security purposes.

Treatment of Data After Data Collection

Data Reduction

Individual transcripts. Transcripts of individual interviews were prepared from rough notes written on the interview guides and from a rerun of the camcorder video tapes and audio tapes. Individual transcripts were typed as close to verbatim as is possible with accented English and as soon as possible after the interview.

Summaries. A summary of quotations sheet was prepared from each transcript to isolate the data to the participant's responses. The summary of quotations sheets were distributed to participants to validate the data and to seek additional comments. Each participant received a copy of her own summary of quotations sheet and each participant verbally advised the researcher that she believed her summary of her individual interview was accurately recorded. The summary of quotations sheets were used to reduce the data, to obtain participant's input, and to act as a "guide to plan the next contact [and to pull] together the data in the 'soft computer' - the fieldworker's mind" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 51).

Group transcript. A transcript of the group interview was prepared from rough notes written on the interview guide and from a rerun of the camcorder video tape and tape recorder audio tape. The transcript was typed as close to

verbatim as is possible with accented English and as soon as possible after the interview.

Codes. Codes were established, prior to data collection, to classify, organize and identify patterns within the data. The codes semantically matched the concept which they were describing and followed the format set up by the research questions or focus questions. Codes were revised after data collection to reflect the information gathered. Using the revised codes, the summary of quotations sheet was produced from the group interview transcript.

Before the individual data and group data were merged, reflective remarks and memos were written, and the codes were revised and extended to words or phrase headings.

Memos and remarks. Reflective remarks were noted and the researcher kept short memos of more detailed explanations. Reflective remarks were written up in one sentence, point form, to describe commonalities, differences and explanations, assumptions and findings. Memos were used to record ideas because "when ideas strike [you should] STOP whatever else you are doing and write the memo. Get it down; don't worry about prose elegance or even grammar. Include your musings of all sorts, even the fuzzy and foggy ones. Give yourself the freedom to think. Don't self-censor" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 71). The researcher used memos to look at the "big picture," at the

"patterns or themes emerging," and to perform an audit of what's known, how well it's known, to collate findings, look for missing data discrepancies and puzzling situations (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 75).

Codes revised. The codes were revised to reflect changes; several codes that were not used, were dropped, several codes were broken into subcodes or subcategories, and new codes emerged. The codes were then extended to word or phrase headings. Reflective remarks, memos and the headings were "crucial for data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 67).

Data merge. Using the headings, data from the individual quotations sheets and from the group quotations sheet as well as reflective remarks and memos were merged to a findings summary. The findings summary was distributed to each participant for audit. Each participant contacted the researcher to confirm the accuracy of the data as well as to offer additional comments to be included in the findings summary.

Biographies. A short biography of each participant was prepared by the researcher to better understand the meaning or interpretation of the data. The biography was reviewed and approved by each participant, and included in the study. Mishler (1979) in Miles and Huberman (1984) supports the need for descriptive or background data because meaning in context reduces the risk of

misunderstanding - "contexts drive the way we understand the meaning of events" (p. 92). The biography assisted the researcher in interpreting and understanding the context of the participant's perspective and description of events.

Data Display

The data were clustered which represented a logical or natural group of data and when appropriate they were presented visually. Visual displays, when appropriate, were presented to give a clear understanding of the information. Significant findings and discussion were then drawn from the visual displays.

The researcher "scouted around, sleuthed, and took second and third looks" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 89) at the data before setting up and entering information into each matrix. The researcher spent time to think "through the meaning of the data in the display" (p. 91), and related it back to the study, before writing up the findings.

Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

The researcher used the inductive analysis approach to search for patterns, themes or categories emerging out of the data. Significant findings and findings for further elaboration and discussion were then drawn. Using a modified triangulation verification strategy, one external person and each participant was asked to review and make independent judgements about the content and meaning of

patterns, themes, categories and conclusions recorded as merging from the data.

Summary

The methodology proposed for this study included a request to access graduate records at a private vocational school, requests for graduates to participate, release-of-information forms to access participant's records, interview guides, rough notes, camcorder tapes, tape recorder tapes, verbatim transcripts, summary quotations sheets, coding, reflective remarks, memos, and revised coding extended to headings. Data were reduced and displayed before conclusions were drawn or verified. Summaries were presented through visual representations when appropriate, accompanied by a write-up or analysis of the presentation. The qualitative methodology was drawn from Miles and Huberman's (1984) minimal set of reporting functions and from Patton's qualitative reference material.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The findings from six individual and one group interview are reported and described in this chapter addressing the experiences of immigrant women who have made the transition to employment or further education through a selected private vocational office systems training program.

The findings include direct quotations from the immigrant women who participated in the study, "the most desirable data to obtain" from transcriptions of interviews (Patton, 1980, p. 248).

Short biographies of participants, prepared by the researcher to better understand the meaning or interpretation of the data, are included "to allow the reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people presented in the report," and to understand the findings in context (Patton, 1980, p. 343).

Short Biographies of Participants

Amy

Amy is presently completing her final year of a post secondary educational program. Amy is a petite oriental woman who looks ten to fifteen years younger than her age.

Amy speaks openly about her perseverance and states her opinions with confidence "Sometimes, not sometimes, most of the time." Amy's keen sense of humor shines through - when asked how old she was when she immigrated she replied "thirty something" and we laughed. Amy likes to watch hockey and suggests John Short's radio show and sports reviews for interest and ease of reading.

Not afraid of hard work and commitment, Amy continues to work part-time while going to school full-time. Amy is motivated to reach for her goal of securing clerical employment which would provide the financial stability needed to support her household and her mother.

Since immigrating to Canada, Amy has completed English programs, grade twelve, office systems training and first year secretarial arts at a post secondary institution. Although Amy has always had to work at at least one part-time job while attending school and although her first language is not English, Amy has left behind a trail of perfect attendance and excellent grades.

Amy gave up her teaching profession in Asia to immigrate to Canada. Amy came to Canada for a visit and decided to accept a job offer to work as a domestic for her friend. Amy immigrated because her "marriage was in trouble, she needed a change, and she found Canada to be uncrowded, peaceful and friendly." Amy's brother had

immigrated to the United States previously and completed a doctorate program.

Born in one Asian country, Amy emigrated to another with her family when she was a toddler. At age four, her father died. Amy had six brothers and sisters - now only one brother and one sister. The other children were given away or died (the Second World War). Amy's sister was a baby when her father died and her sister was given away to another family. Years later the sister's foster parents died and someone told her sister about her real mother, Amy's mother. Amy's mother and her sister were then reunited and the family grew to four (Amy, her mother, her brother and his family and her newly found sister).

Amy believes her personal strengths include her ability to be frugal and a wise money manager, and her ability to meet a challenge head on with hard work in both employment and education.

Bing

Bing, a married woman with two sons and one daughter, is employed in an insurance company. She is a tall and slender oriental woman with excellent posture.

Bing converses easily, offers advice openly and tactfully expresses herself when disagreeing with other's comments "I look at reality a little bit different."

Bing works full-time and shares the household and family responsibilities with her husband. Bing makes

compromises in the home when making decisions regarding her children, compromises between the Asian and Canadian cultures (Asian children are more respectful to older people than are Canadian children, Asian parents are more in favor of males than are Canadian parents, and English versus native language spoken in the home).

Before Bing secured her position in the insurance office, she completed an office systems training program and was employed as a bookkeeper. Before staying home to raise her children and manage her household, Bing worked as a sewing operator and laboratory aid. Bing was born in Asia and when she was two years old, her parents immigrated to Canada. Bing and her sister were then cared for by their grandmother in Asia until Bing's father sent for them when Bing was thirteen. Bing and her sister then came to Canada to live with their parents and two brothers born in Canada. Bing's grandmother came about one year later. Bing was mainstreamed into a grade six classroom when she immigrated to Canada even though she did not understand English, but went on to complete her schooling. Bing often feels closer to her grandmother than to her mother and father.

Bing's great grandfather helped build the national railway lines in Canada and her grandfather was born in Victoria and raised in Canada. However, her Canadian-born

grandfather returned to Asia to marry and have children (Bing's father).

Bing feels her most redeeming qualities are her "confidence which comes from believing in yourself," her sense of humor which comes from her ability to "laugh at oneself" and her life purpose which is to "make your own reality."

Emelia

Emelia is an outgoing, tall and slim European woman who is twenty-four years old. Emelia is a single woman who immigrated to Canada several years before her mother immigrated to join her in Canada. She helps to guide and support her mother in every way she can and is employed as a word processor operator.

Emelia is able to express her opinions and feelings "and that's cruel and women were suffering and I cannot accept that," is able to listen and prompt others "we want to hear them," and values other's opinions "that's a point too." Emelia is a self-sufficient woman who has had to rely on her ability to ask questions and seek opportunities to ease her transition to employment in Canada.

Prior to her employment as a word processor operator, Emelia had been enrolled in university part-time, and completed office systems training and English courses. Emelia was employed full-time in an educational setting in Europe after attending business college.

Emelia immigrated to Canada from Europe at the age of twenty-one. Emelia was met at the airport by a woman volunteer who she described as being the most "unselfish human being" on earth who only wanted to help her. Truly, the woman volunteer was someone who helped with basic needs of food and shelter and with using the transit system, medical and dental services, contact with agencies and introduction to the church. She was always there when Emelia needed her.

Emelia escaped from her homeland because she felt "trapped as a woman" and because she wanted to make a better life for her generations to come. Emelia did not choose Canada, but when it was suggested to her, she thought, "Canada, OK Canada."

Emelia's strengths lie in her ability to express herself, ambition to educate herself, willingness to help others "where to go, who to talk to, when to go, how to go and so on," and ability to self-counsel - to be confident and persistent, to never doubt yourself "if you doubt yourself, you've lost it."

Karey

Karey is employed as a word processor operator, and is a single woman who helps to support her mother. Karey is a petite oriental woman who said that she was 'just 30' but looks much, much younger.

Karey is easy to talk to and lighthearted, quoting quips in the interviews related to the study. Karey recognizes discrimination exists but believes you must not be "suspicious" and that you must "put that aside and concentrate on what you are doing . . . to get ahead faster." Karey enjoys her work and enjoys learning "take more courses and improve myself." In addition to being a member of a dance troupe, Karey teaches oriental dancing to children.

Since immigrating to Canada at age twenty, Karey completed bank teller training, a word processing course, an automated office systems program, several career enrichment workshops and was employed in temporary clerical and clerk positions. Karey was a government employee in her home country before emigrating to Canada.

Karey was born in one Asian country and immigrated when she was a child to another Asian country with her family. Karey grew up on a rubber estate where the family shared duties. Her brothers were always given preferential treatment by grandparents and parents. After Karey's father died, Karey and her mother immigrated to Canada because four siblings were here already and they thought they "might as well join them."

Karey believes attitude is important "number one attitude, you have to be able to learn fast, be flexible"; and that you should "rebel against" the myth that men are

better than women. Karey also believes one should not dwell on discrimination or on one's command of the English language "double underline that," and realize it's "up to the individual to make it."

Krystyna

Krystyna is employed part-time and will not actively seek full-time clerical employment until her leg injury from a sports accident is healed. Krystyna is a beautiful fifty-two year old European woman who lives with her husband and youngest daughter. She was a widow for fourteen years before immigrating to Canada to be wed.

Smiling and laughing with ease, Krystyna offers lighthearted recollections of learning the English language and heartfelt stories of homesickness "I cried, my husband didn't know but I cried."

Krystyna holds a university degree from Europe and several years management experience in an office and is willing to start over in Canada taking English and office systems courses. Krystyna aspires to work with one language, the language of numbers, be it money, bookkeeping or accounting.

When Krystyna talks about her good friends, neighbors and colleagues at home, she makes you feel she would be a great personal friend to have as well as a loyal employee. Krystyna is determined to learn English and/or take courses or secure full-time employment.

Wanda

Wanda is employed in an accounting department, is married and has one young daughter. Wanda is a petite European woman who is a youthful thirty-five years of age.

Wanda is an interesting person to talk to because you can feel her emotions when she offers personal reflections and when she describes her emigration, life in Canada and home country. After successfully completing an accounting course, Wanda is considering returning to school or seeking a more challenging position. Wanda demonstrated persistence in understanding English when she obtained her drivers licence "computer exam . . . took four hours . . . I passed." Wanda maintains the European culture in her home by speaking her native language and using daycares that partially provide her daughter with the native language as well.

Wanda completed English courses and an office systems course in Canada prior to her clerical employment and brings a wealth of proven business experience and education from her home country. Wanda and her husband owned and operated a restaurant before settling in Edmonton. Wanda came to Canada to be married when she was twenty-nine, "just because he was here, if he had been in Russia, it's fine with me, I would have gone to Russia."

Wanda cares for and places her family first "family is very important." Wanda has been successful using her vast

experience and education from her native country as a basis for the education, training and employment experience obtained in Canada.

Participants' Experiences

The findings reflect the participants' experiences of making the transition to employment through an office systems training program. The experiences include deterrents and motivators with regard to age; families; status, dependents and responsibilities; immigration; homesickness; adjusting; lack of information; English, education, and employment. Findings also include goals and aspirations of the participants and practical strategies recommended by the participants to other new immigrant women that could ease transition to employment.

Ages of Participants

As shown in Table 1, two participants in the study are not employed full-time. One participant is working part-time and the other participant is attending school. The two participants who are not employed full-time are the two oldest participants and were also the oldest to emigrate. The older participants commented on their experiences of returning to school and seeking employment "I was too old," "If you are young you want to study, doesn't matter . . .

older you don't have too much time to finish university again," "Not much time for me, time running out."

Table 1

Ages from Immigration to Employment

Name	Ages of Participants			
	Immigrated	Trained	Employed	In 1991
Krystyna	46	49	-	52
Amy	35	40	-	43
Wanda	29	32	33	35
Emelia	20	21	22	24
Karey	20	27	28	30
Bing	13	37	38	40

A younger participant who was twenty-four felt there is a difference between someone 18 - 29 and someone 30 - 45 looking for work "A younger person, much easier to embrace challenge than an older person. A younger person is more open, more ready to accept and change whereas an older person is more according to what she has been learning and doing for several years, much harder to change habits once you are older." One older participant felt there is no difference between a person 18 - 29 and a person 30 - 45 looking for work "your belief system is working no matter how old you are," your confidence comes "from believing in yourself . . . from understanding yourself," and your

ability to change is in place when you "have to be flexible."

The comments from the older participants described feelings in retrospect, of being too old to emigrate, of being too old to take training or return to university, and of being too old to find work as an immigrant woman. Conversely, only one participant described advantages of being a mature person: feelings of confidence and self-esteem, and flexibility, qualities most older people possess.

Nuclear or Extended Family

As shown in Table 2, three participants lived in an extended family situation before emigrating to Canada and the other three participants lived on their own in nuclear family situations.

The participants described the traditional head of the household in their home country as being male, either their father or brother. Living in Canada, two of the married participants identified the head of their household as male and one married participant identified the head of the household as a shared or equal responsibility between the husband and wife. One single participant in the study lives in an extended family where her older brother is the head of the household. Another single participant lives in an extended situation where she is head of the household

and the third single participant lives on her own. The three single participants stated that if they were to be married, the head of the household would be different than their traditional culture, the head of the household would be a shared or equal responsibility.

Table 2

Types of Families

Name	Status	Family	Head/House
	Before Emigrating to Canada		
Wanda	Single/Own	Nuclear	Male
Krystyna	Single/Own	Nuclear	Male
Emelia	Single/Own	Nuclear	Male
Karey	Single/Home	Extended	Male
Bing	Single/Home	Extended	Male
Amy	Married	Extended	Male
	After Emigrating to Canada		
Wanda	Married	Nuclear	Male
Krystyna	Married	Nuclear	Male
Emelia	Single/Own	Nuclear	Self
Karey	Single/Own	Extended	Male
Bing	Married	Nuclear	Equal
Amy	Single/Own	Extended	Self
	Future Plans		
Wanda	Married	Extended	Male
Krystyna	Married	Extended	Male
Emelia	Married	Extended	Equal
Karey	Married	Extended	Equal
Bing	Married	Extended	Equal
Amy	Single/Own	Extended	Self

From an extended family situation, one participant stated that she learned the native language of Toisan from her grandmother who was caring for her; and the other participant said the first language she learned was Romanian because her Romanian grandmother was looking after her, although her official first language is Hungarian.

Participants noted that in extended homes there is a greater opportunity for a family member to provide child care and greater opportunity for their native language to be spoken. One participant stated, that because of an extended family situation, she actually feels closer to her grandmother than her parents. Other participants stated that they have sponsored and are willing to sponsor relatives and encourage family members to emigrate and join them in their home. The shared responsibility of the household, including finances, has encouraged the woman to work out of the home.

Status, Dependents, Responsibilities

As shown in Table 3, married participants have dependent children and single participants do not. However, the single participants did identify their mothers as other dependents. A single participant stated that one deterrent to seeking financial assistance to continue education is that parents are not considered as dependents, only children. She said financial assistance was not

available for mothers, as if "you have to feed your kids but you don't have to feed your mom."

Table 3

Marital Status and Dependents

Name	Status	# Children	# Dependent Children	# Other Dependents
Wanda	Married	1	1	-
Krystyna	Married	2	1	-
Bing	Married	3	3	-
Karey	Single	0	0	1 Mother
Emelia	Single	0	0	1 Mother
Amy	Single	0	0	1 Mother

In a situation where a mother of a participant recently emigrated with her two sons, the participant said she was able to, through her experience in making the transition to employment in Canada, "pass on information to her mom" to help her adjust to life in Canada, in addition to "moral and financial support."

The participants shared financial responsibilities in their home country. One participant's family worked together on a tree farm; one participant and her spouse were both employed; a participant who was living with her grandmother was financially supported by the father in Canada; and three participants were employed and living on their own. Presently, participants' spouses are employed. Four participants are employed full-time, one participant

is employed part-time and one participant is a full-time student.

Because each participant has financial responsibilities to either support herself, herself and a dependent or to contribute to the family income, they felt personal financing of further English courses, training or education to obtain employment is a deterrent.

Emigration to Canada

As shown in Table 4, three participants emigrated from Asia, two from Hong Kong and one from Malaysia. The two from Hong Kong relocated with their families to Hong Kong from China when they were very young. Three participants in the study emigrated from Europe.

Amy, an adventuresome teacher, came as a tourist at age thirty-five for a visit and liked Canada right off because it was peaceful and friendly. She was looking for a change, knew her marriage was in trouble, and so accepted a job offer from her friend in Canada. She applied for a work permit, secured her landed immigrant status and worked for three years before starting school.

Karey had three brothers and one sister in North America already, and with the recent death of her father, and the opportunity to be sponsored by her brother, Karey came to Canada at age twenty with her mother.

Table 4

Arrival in Canada

		Emigrated to Canada			
Name	Born	From	Age	Yrs Ago	Reason
Wanda	Poland	Poland	29	6	to be married, daughter's future
Krystyna	Poland	Poland	46	5	to be married, to a safe country
Emelia	Romania	Austria	20	4	felt trapped as a woman, would not raise children in home country
Karey	Malaysia	Malaysia	20	10	to join family, would return for visit not to stay
Bing	China	Hong Kong	13	27	to join parents, to raise family
eAmy	China	Hong Kong	35	8	to peaceful country, opportunities here for kids, avoid communist country

Bing and her younger sister were living in Hong Kong with their grandmother for eleven years before coming to Canada at age thirteen to live with her parents and younger brothers.

Emelia was born in one European country and relocated to another to be able to emigrate. Her goal was to pursue a life in a country where women were treated fairly. She left because she "felt trapped as a woman, as a human being, especially as a woman, trapped." She had not specifically wanted to come to Canada, it just happened

that way, she didn't have anybody anywhere and when the embassy suggested Canada, she said "Canada, OK, Canada."

Wanda, on the other hand, emigrated to join her fiance in Calgary whom she married before moving to Edmonton.

Krystyna emigrated to marry her fiance who was living in Canada and to provide opportunities for her daughters and grandchildren as well.

Table 4 and the following comments show how everyone in the study believed that their immigration to Canada was good for the next generation, for education, for employment and for opportunities. "Immigrate for the children because it is so difficult to get into university in Hong Kong." "Our daughter's future is here." "Come for the kids." "Avoid the communist country." "Hong Kong is not stable after 1997." A discussion regarding childbirth revealed reasons for emigrating to Canada. The participants supported the decision to emigrate for their next generation. The following three comments from three different participants were not in favor of raising children in their native countries.

- You had to be a cow for the government, bearing children and have them, and as many as they wanted, and no contraception was available, no food for the children, OK you could have the children but you cannot feed the children because there is nothing you can feed them with and I thought, I will never never

have children in this country, I would never ever have that. It wouldn't be fair for the child or for me. You cannot do a thing about it unless you choose not to have sex, that is the only thing you could do, not to have children. If you were caught with contraceptives in your hands you would have been punished . . . and if they found out you had an abortion you are penalized. And that's very cruel and women were suffering and I cannot accept that.

- You could only have one child. If you have the second one . . . the government won't support it and get punishment and you would have to, I don't know where you would get money to support your second child.
- You can have as many as you like, prefer a male in the family, going on producing hoping to get a boy . . . the grandparents are after her, it wasn't the husband's fault, it was hers.

Refugee women have been described as being unable to return to their former country because of well founded fears. One of the fears for these immigrant women who participated in the study is the fear of raising children in their native country. This fear is also described by the participants as a motivator for their perseverance in Canada.

Homesickness

As shown in Table 5, participants identified family members they long for, who they would like to immigrate to Canada: a mother, brother, daughter, grandchild, and sisters. One brother and sister have been "rejected because of large families." All the participants agreed that "friends are not the same, family is very important."

Table 5

Homesickness

Name	Hope to Immigrate	Homesick For Family	Homesick For Home
Wanda	Mother	Yes	Yes
Krystyna	Daughter/grandchild	Yes	Yes
Emelia	Immediate family	Yes	Yes
Karey	Immediate family	Yes	Yes
Amy	Immediate family	Yes	No
Bing		Yes	Yes

What 'homesick' brings to mind	Ways to Deal with Homesickness
Family - mom, father, sister Friends, neighbours Friendships	Multicultural organizations and events. Telephone, visit.
City, apartment, nice places Kinds of foods Warm weather	Hope to get back soon to visit.
Everything, the environment Where you grew up 1000 year old houses	Ambition to earn enough money to go for a visit.
Architecture Lots of people, the pace Pink blossoms	Long for home

All participants talked about homesickness for family, friends and home. It is interesting that it didn't matter why they emigrated to Canada, how long ago they emigrated, or how many of their immediate family were here or in their native land, how old they were, whether they were single or married or whether they had children or not, they all felt some degree of homesickness.

As shown in Table 5, all but one participant was homesick for their home or environment and all the participants were homesick for friends or family. As a family grows, so grows the expense of travelling. Returning to visit or placing telephone calls both place a strain on the budget and are dependent on the participant's financial status. When asked if it was harder for someone poor to deal with homesickness, they agreed it would be "hard to deal with anything - the poorer you are, the harder it is, the harder it hits you, because you don't have alternative methods to pay." "I was getting money to make phone calls, I was working scrubbing floors." "Babysat to get some money to phone my parents. I got my money and I spent it on phone calls - I rather not eat, rather phone home." "No, I wasn't back, we are planning to go next summer, we just can't afford it."

As shown in Table 5, the word homesick made the participants think of and talk about things that were not immediately attainable for them such as family, friends,

environment, foods, architecture, population and pace, and the place where they grew up. One participant described multiculturalism as a way to deal with homesickness "to appease homesickness, it makes you feel at home" that doesn't "take anything away from society."

Participants talked about their personal homesickness and its relationship to communicating in English. "Oh I cried, my husband didn't know, but I cried . . . trouble with language makes me so unhappy, so uncomfortable, it was difficult, now I am really, really, happy that I can speak with people . . . go to the store and to the theatre;" "I have to be honest, if I have to make decision about, I don't think I would come, just because first year I come I was homesick, for a year everyday I was crying, now it is much, much easier because at first I couldn't communicate."

Associations working with immigrant women recognize the homesickness described by the participants. In the *Focus for the 90's*, the Alberta Multicultural Commission promotes "a family's sharing of its heritage [which] gives each member a feeling of identity and a sense of self-worth" (p. 14). "Such families become the strength of their communities. In turn these communities offer families support. In this way, the person, the family and the community combine to contribute to the richness of life in Alberta" (p. 14).

Participants strongly suggest the need for English skills to communicate, funds for phoning and travel to their native home, and personal contact with others in multicultural groups to help overcome homesickness. The multicultural education programs acknowledge that women immigrants need English skills in the community, to acquire training or education, to secure employment to "participate actively in the communities in which they live" (Gibaut, 1988, p. 87).

Dealing with Cultural Differences

Participants learned to deal with cultural differences. The following are participants' comments about the difficulty of making friends and contacts in Canada. "Close friends are Chinese. Other people have lots of friends and don't need me." "Friends in Poland are very, very open . . . come to my home, to my apartment, anytime, at night too. Here, if you want to go to somebody, you call, you ask, very different, you know. I would like somebody to come to my home without calling, you know." Here, "you meet people but the person doesn't care about you."

Participants were appreciative of having friends and family here. One participant came to join her parents; one was met by her brother, sister-in-law and niece and came with her mother; two were met by their future husbands; one

came to visit and stayed; and the other participant came without knowing anyone but was fortunate to be met by a next friend (someone who isn't a personal friend, but someone who cares). Her next friend was a lady from the church who met her at the airport and who volunteered her time.

> Very, very helpful, she helped everyone there, above and beyond what her responsibilities are. She just, if you feel sick, or your tooth hurts, where do you go, you don't know how the system works, you don't know anything, so basically I called her and she picked me up and showed me. Showed me where to shop, how to shop, gave me ideas, because I had very little money, how to manage money since you can spend $500 or spend $200 buying almost the same stuff, so she showed me smart shoppers' tricks and she was just there, took me to the church . . . and gave me the opportunity to meet people there within the community and that helped a lot. Because I was so unbelievably lonely, didn't have anybody, didn't know anybody. So she was very good that way, she was so unselfishly wonderful to people and to me, to be such a big support when I first arrived.

The pace differs from one country to another. Leisurely in Malaysia, quick in Hong Kong, fast in Poland weekdays, slow on Sundays. "More leisurely in Malaysia,

slow and steady," "in Hong Kong, really fast." In Poland people are shopping, "you couldn't buy what you needed and rushing, and on Sunday, relaxing walk." "They walk, they push carriages, go to parks, I do miss that." A comment to which everyone chuckled in agreement was that in Canada "on date lines . . . they say, candlelit suppers, nice fires and long walks - but you never see people taking strolls or walks . . . they have it in their minds, taking long walks with boyfriends." In Canada people do not walk "here it is different because every family has two cars, even three blocks, you drive to buy milk."

The participants agreed that although it is difficult to adjust to the differences, they are changing, changing because they have to, "I'm changing, I see myself changing everyday." Moussa (1988) recognizes the immigrant women's willingness, "readiness and ability to adjust" (p. 16).

Aging, limited time to complete schooling or retraining, responsibilities in an extended home situation, parents as dependents, immigration, homesickness, and adjustment to the Canadian culture were experiences expressed in terms of deterrents related to English, education and employment.

The participants stated that their self-confidence and their reasons for emigrating to Canada served as the motivation needed to overcome the deterrents, to acquire

English communication skills, obtain training and secure employment.

Lack of English

Participants described lack of communication skills in English as a specific deterrent in making the transition to employment in Canada through training programs. The participants describe their difficulties in acquiring English.

English as a Second Language

The "English as a Second Language" term does not apply to all immigrants. As shown in Table 6, English is the second language for only one participant; English is the third, fourth or fifth language for the other participants in the study. Learning to communicate in English is perceived by the participants as a deterrent and their bilingualism as an asset.

Table 6

Languages and/or Dialects

Name	Languages and/or Dialects Fluent In
Amy	Cantonese, English
Krystyna	Polish, Russian, English
Emelia	Romanian, Hungarian, English
Bing	Toisan, Cantonese, English
Karey	Hakka, Mandarin, Cantonese, Malaysian, English
Wanda	Polish, Russian, Czechoslovakian, Ukrainian, English

English Comprehension

Participants identified listening comprehension or understanding what you hear in English as well as the pronunciation of English as the most difficult parts of learning the language.

Listening Comprehension

- Sometimes, not sometimes, most of the time, if I miss one word (or letter) I get opposite wrong idea especially people say can'T or can; I can not hear the can'T, missed the T, I don't know can or can'T.
- Sometimes people speak too fast.
- Listening comprehension hardest thing to overcome, understanding what is being told.

Pronunciation

- Different meanings but the same word.
- Spelling very difficult.
- My speaking isn't good.
- Chinese language does not include past tense or present or future.
- I don't know how to pronounce a word, I can find the definition in the dictionary but sometimes I don't know how to pronounce a word.
- Biggest problem is my pronunciation because it was really different from my language.
- In Polish you speak with different accent but we understand you. If you put the accent in a different

place (in English), sometimes, people don't understand you, I don't know why.

One participant emphasized the point that trying to understand pronunciation of a word in most dictionaries is very difficult.

Participants' comments confirm that the English language to an untrained ear, sounds like one big word that does not stop, iamfinethankyouandhowareyou or sounds like rushing water over a waterfall or a swift current in a river "water, the water in the river."

The participants whose first language was Chinese stated it was easier for Europeans to learn English because Europeans use a similar alphabet. They felt it was more difficult for oriental people to learn the alphabet because they "don't use alphabet (they) just learn strokes." "Chinese words are just like a picture, but in English you put the alphabet together."

As shown in Table 7, the participants in the study agreed that television programs helped them to learn English, especially comedy and talk shows. Participants commented that comedy was good because you learn English while you are in a playful spirit and because you can identify with actions to assist with putting the picture together. Comedy was described as where you often say less to say more to get the point across; where scenes rely on body language; where the pace, level of speech, characters

and situations are family-oriented to accommodate prime time television.

Table 7

Acquiring English through Television

Type of Show	Reasons
Humor & Comedy Cosby Show Perfect Strangers Three's Company	Makes you relax, even though you don't know what they are talking about, they laugh, you laugh. They make you relax, you can learn better when you are relaxed, forget about your... A playful way of learning, when you enjoy it, you can learn more.
Good movies/soaps Young & Restless	You can see the facial expressions. You read more from that, catch on to what they are saying.
Talk shows Oprah Donahue	They are explicit.

Interview shows were suggested for clarity. Comments described interview shows that are not successful by chance, but shows that are successful because of people who are trained in the skill of speech including enunciation and a delivery which is calculated to stay on topic (someone asks questions, someone answers, and few interrupt).

Participants in the study recommended meeting English speaking people to talk to, making up a list of words for someone to record on tape so you can practice the pronunciation, reading directions to refine your skills of looking at words "the way they are and not add things in your mind or take out." They also suggested taking English

before emigration, a "compromise on speaking English in the home," "ESL" courses, and finding "someone who has the time to listen and patience to listen to you, unless you use it all the time you will lose it."

As shown in Table 8, opinions differed when participants were asked if immigrants speaking in their native languages in the home had an affect on spoken English in the workplace.

- They told me at work that I spoke better English on Friday than I did on Monday. This is very interesting because more than one person made the same observation. I spoke Hungarian at home during the weekend and on Monday it was harder to catch on. It is true, I feel more comfortable by the end of the week simply because I start thinking in English.
- Absolutely, yeah, because I speak on Saturday and Sunday in Polish, I think so too.

Table 8

Languages and/or Dialects Spoken in the Home

Name	Languages in Home	Effect in Workplace
Wanda	Polish	Yes
Krystyna	Polish	Yes
Emelia	Hungarian	Yes
Karey	Hakka sometimes English	No difference noted
Bing	Chinese and English	Undecided
Amy	Chinese	No comment

Others commented "No difference, I don't think it makes a difference," "Friday is actually a good day, everyone speaks good English on Friday. Everyone in our office, everyone comes in Oh! Friday!, spirits are up." Four participants spoke their native language in the home and two spoke mixed native language and English. Those who believed speaking their native language in the home affected their spoken English in the workplace spoke only Polish or Hungarian in the home.

A discussion regarding accents revealed that everyone liked to listen to someone English or British, and like music, different people liked to listen to different accents. Participants said they do not always hear their own accent, unless they tape it and play it back, much the same way as each one of us does not know what our own voice sounds like until it is heard on tape.

English doesn't always come naturally. Participants write "to do" notes in mixed language "I write in English, if I can't find an expression, I write in Chinese", "I don't remember in English, sometimes I don't remember in Romanian, I write down whatever language, it is easy when you write fast, whatever language comes out," "I started writing in English," "I always write in English," "This is closely related to starting to involuntarily process information in English."

All the participants dream in their native language. "I dream in three languages, you only start dreaming in English when you start understanding it like your own." Two participants related their best dreams where they didn't want to wake up. "One time I had a dream, I make a very good speech, fluent English, I was so happy, Oh! It was just a dream," and "I had one time the same . . . my English in the dream was so excellent, I was surprised."

And many lessons are to be learned in English communication, lessons like knowing which questions to ask in the workplace. One of the participants knew already "they don't like you asking how much they are making, and how old they are," and another knew only after she got into a little trouble "I learned my lesson." She related the little trouble she got into. "I asked how much she was making, and she ignored me, and the cost of your house. At home to ask how much your house was, it's like this is how much it was, so what is the big deal about it. The reason I ask questions is for information, not because I want to know how much money you make, what I'm interested in is a person in your position, your age with your experience, how much money do you make. Not you as a person, you born in 19whatever." Others commented that you have to rephrase to ask "in this occupation how much are they making," and it's the straight forward approach that Canadians do not like.

The following quote relates a story of one of the participants shopping for an English greeting card to send to her friend just to say "hello." "One day I wanted to send a card to my friend in Poland. I bought one card, writing on sympathy. Fortunately I met my friend who knew English better than I do and she asked me 'To whom are you sending this card, who is dead?' 'Why dead,' I asked, and she explained."

Need for English

Participants agreed that English does have an effect on acquiring training or further education and on obtaining employment.

- Learn, learn and learn because whether you want to be tradesman or be a professor or whatever, you need to learn the language and that gives you basically first step into the door to . . . to give equal opportunity.
- When an employer sees two people, two tradesmen, one speaks English, one does not, then which one would he choose, the one who speaks the language.
- English is most important, even in Chinatown where western people also shop.
- Rather hire Canadians than immigrants . . . problems with English.
- Difficult for immigrants to get a job because of problem with language.

- English of course . . . my English was not good enough so would have problems in school.
- Have to learn English first.
- If they want to live in Canada, they have to take English courses.
- You have to know the language and you should do all the effort to learn it, just learn it.
- I was always scared of English.
- If my English was perfect, I wouldn't have any problems.
- I would say the most important thing is language, English of course. They should take some English language.
- Advise them to take ESL.
- I think before I talk. Sometimes I avoid conversation.
- Most important is English, get a job, school . . . the main thing is English.
- Have to learn English first.

When asked what would go against a person to find a job in Canada, the participants agreed that it would be a lack of "English, of course." Participants also agreed that a lack of English skills would be a deterrent to furthering their education or training and would cause "problems in school."

Education

The participants' comments suggest that immigrant women need training and/or educational programs to make the transition to employment in Canada. The participants describe their difficulties in acquiring training and/or education.

Scheduling

One participant commented that full-time programs should be scheduled with more hours in a day and more days in a week, resulting in shorter courses. Adults are time and money conscious, "time running out," and the quicker an adult student can complete training or education, the quicker an adult can return to employment.

Credentials

As shown in Table 9, participants' comments disclosed difficulty in having past education, training and/or experience recognized in Canada.

Comments suggested that foreign credentials were not easily or fairly recognized in Canada (teacher training, business diploma, engineering degree, past experience). "I have business college diploma . . . credentials that's nothing here." One participant who has a two year teaching certificate and teaching experience in her home country completed high school here, an office systems program, and now a two year program at an institute of technology. She

commented that she knew she would have to work hard to restore her credentials "but not this hard."

Table 9

Credential Recognition

Name	Credentials in Home Country	Coursework/Training in Canada
Bing	Grade VI	Grade XII, Office Systems training
Karey	Grade XII Office Experience	Bank Teller training, Office Systems training, workshops
Amy	Teacher Training Teaching Experience	Grade XII, ESL, Office Systems training, Two Year Technology program
Wanda	Business Diploma Business Experience	ESL, Office Systems training, Financial Accounting coursework
Krystyna	Metallurgy Engineering Business Experience	ESL, Office Systems training
Emelia	Business College Business Experience	ESL, Office Systems training, TOEFL, and U of A

Four of the participants enrolled in an office training program in Canada although they had business experience or training from their home country, and one participant changed vocations because her credentials were not recognized. Another participant was required to take the TOEFL to be considered for university. The participants' goals and aspirations, "maybe university," "become an estate officer," "business and training," "computer operator," "useful career . . . like in Poland,"

"educate myself" included further education and/or career development.

Programs

Participants commented on the federal government (Canada Employment Centre) and the provincial government (Alberta Career Development and Employment) funding of the office systems training program.

- I didn't pay and I can say the government helped me.
- Government paid for expenses, apartment.
- Government helped me all the way . . . money gave me peace of mind . . . gave me the strength to study.
- Government helped me because I did not have to pay for this course, very important.
- UIC lady advised I should take the course, a good course, and they will not make me pay for it. It is very important because I couldn't afford to pay $4000 for education.

The participants referenced the Office Systems training program funded by the government.

- Enrolled for computers
- Overcome my barriers, basically English and computers.
- You guys were very good, basically I learned 90% of skills of making a resume, of how to present it, how to defend what's in there, how to present yourself. I cannot stress this enough.

- You can't believe how I improved my English from this school.
- Improved [English] because I have a problem with listening and understanding.
- The learning spirit there was very important.
- Comfortable there because everyone is looking for an opportunity.
- [The instructor] gets across the confidence, very assertive, you believe what she says because she is a real person off stage, you get the feeling she is there to help.
- Of course the course, pretty good hours. Five months is good.

Participants stated financial support is available to take English and training courses and recommended the Office Systems training program as an important step in acquiring "computer training," "English skills," and confidence to seek employment. One participant said she called many places before finding the office systems training program "schooling that would be appropriate for me." Participants felt the office systems training program provided good scheduling and a program that promoted a learning spirit and confidence.

Females in Education

The discussion of who and what influenced or encouraged the participants' self-confidence led to a

question of whether brothers or sons in families received the same encouragement.

- Had that knowledge when I was very young, my grandmother treated my brothers differently, men are always better than women, I was made to think that way all the time. I rebel against that.
- Yes! Very much true, for ancient Chinese society, always prefer men being the top. The boy usually carries the family name and like in China, mostly depend on the boy, the older boy especially. In China, it's tradition, boys are more important than girls.
- I cannot say I was treated differently (but you) have to be twice as good to get the same promotions men do.
- No, we can do everything like the men, study same way.

Participants' comments indicated the males received more encouragement than females, attributable in part to the culture in which they were raised. Participants stated that they were made to feel that boys were more important through traditions, through ancient society and from grandparents. Boys were favored to carry on family names and to further their education. The participants who stated that they experienced an equal opportunity to education also stated that they had to be better than the men to get ahead. Growing up in a culture where "men are always better than women" and being treated "differently"

challenged one participant to "rebel against" the tradition.

Need for Education

Participants were adamant that new immigrant women should consider schooling or retraining first in making the transition to employment in Canada.

- Go to school because I didn't want to stay a domestic.
- Need to upgrade myself.
- You have to have Canadian papers.
- Study, study, study.
- Most important to get back to school for better education, for better training.
- Go to school first, if you are young or if you are old.
- Money invested in me by the government in those six months, put me to work since then. They sometimes underestimate the value of, what knowledge can do to a person, just being confident.
- Three basic needs - schooling, housing and transportation.
- I know what I should have been doing by now. I should have finished university.
- Need to learn to sell yourself

Participants stated that immigrant women need to acquire English skills to participate in the educational training programs which are offered in English. The

immigrant women need the educational training programs to gain Canadian credentials and experience to become employable in Canada. One participant stated the need to raise the awareness that "money invested" in training programs for immigrant women is of value and that a six month government sponsored training program resulted in full-time employment "since then."

Employment

The participants describe their experiences, both deterrents and motivators, in acquiring employment in Canada through the following comments.

Sexual and Racial Discrimination

Participants described discrimination and how they have learned to deal with it in their own ways.

One participant had the experience, more than once, of extending her hand as a greeting or departing gesture in an interview situation where the interviewer did not respond. She handles situations similar to this by not arguing and trying to show her ability through her performance and proven school record and marks. One participant said "it happens, there is no way getting people to stop from thinking that way but important how you think about yourself . . . you have to be twice as good to be as good."

Another commented that she sensed discrimination, but chose not to dwell on it. "There might be some but I don't

notice it because I never think about it, you see, I put that aside."

Invisible minority was the term suggested by participants to be used to describe European immigrants who do not have the appearance of an immigrant, who are not visible minorities "because I am from Europe, I don't get the same help from the government, government application forms ask if you are a member of a visible minority and the form lists black, Chinese, Japanese, Southeast Asian, West Asian, and others; but it does not include European."

One participant stated that women in her home country could do "everything like the men, treated in the same way," and another that she was not "treated differently," but her "grandmother and mother had to be there for the men . . . almost like a servant." One participant stated that she saw men "get more promotions" so women had to be "twice as good to get the same promotions men do" in her home country. Another commented that she seen the same in this country. "It's much harder for women, no matter how good you are." Participants discussed and agreed that the differences between women and men in the workforce today in this country can be seen through a glass ceiling effect, a scenario where women can look up, see through the glass ceiling, watch men in more senior positions, yet not break through to move up the corporate ladder.

One participant commented that pregnant women are discriminated against. The fact of life is that "pregnancies happen and without pregnancies people wouldn't be born and women shouldn't be punished for it." The fairness to the other employees and clients was discussed as well as the woman's free choice to become pregnant. However, participants agreed that young workers are few and more are needed and the social structure should be putting funds back into the employees by supporting pregnant women and not supporting the "short hand big buck syndrome" of business. Participants agreed that pregnant women should not be penalized - their income and employment should continue.

Confidence was identified by the participants as that which would overcome racial and sexual discrimination in the workplace.

Participants' comments described their self-confidence as that which "comes from within [yet] nurtured from outside."

- From believing in yourself. It might have come from understanding yourself. Every individual is different. It comes from love, they believe in you, encouragement, for kids it's very important.
- Knowing yourself is very important, it comes from within, nurtured from outside from books, reading, relating, caring.

- To deal with each situation as it comes, my family has a lot to do with that.
- My mother, my grandmother, my teacher - role models that I admired and showed me that you could be better, should be better, you can be different, should be different. Teachers are a big influence.
- I am always scared of something new . . . my daughters believe that I can do anything, I should believe too.

Participants stated that confidence comes from within and confidence was part of their perseverance to obtain an education and to secure employment and overcome deterrents. Suggestions to "learn fast, be flexible, [know] how they want things here not always thinking about where you are from," "be willing to start from bottom level," and "be able to adapt quickly when you come to a new place, new country, strange people" are ways participants deal with differences in attitude.

Past Experience

Participants' comments support Moussa (1988) who said the term "women refugees" conjures up images that women refugees have never been anything else but refugees (p. 16). Participants describe their identity in their country and their need to start all over here. "There I did everything well, and here I have problems." "You have a good job in your country, when you move to another country, you have to start at the beginning." Participants

suggested one way to deal with this is to "Prepare psych for new environment and culture. Not expect everything here as they come from, be open to find friends and job." Participants agreed it was difficult because their native country credentials and experience are not always recognized.

Interviews and Resumes

Comments from participants supported difficulties experienced in preparing resumes and going on formal interviews for employment.

- Interviews are very difficult for me, resumes are new and never interview questions about how I am, not used to saying something good about myself.
- Never, never, I never thought about me, that I am good, never, they'd think I was crazy.
- Hard to brag about yourself when all your life you are told it's what's inside that counts and people should see that. At a job interview, this is who you are and this is what you do, then they will not know, because from just one encounter they will not be able to tell who you are. Selling yourself is the hardest thing that a person has to learn and be confident to talk about oneself. It's another step to overcome.
- The interviews . . . I am always scared.

Comments from those who came from Asia differed from those who came from Europe. Asians commented that with

continued British rule, interviews and resumes are similar to Canada. The participants from Europe believed interviews and resumes differed from their home countries. Securing employment in their home countries was based on an application form and "good qualifications" with little discussion about personal information and no need to say good things about yourself.

The private vocational office training program was identified as the place that supplied the people and the program to help prepare and defend a resume and ability to market yourself.

- Because of my job training, I got this job.
- Resumes, how to present it, defend what's there, present yourself, that's the important step to get into the door and it's then up to you.
- Best quality is how to get across the confidence.
- I really cannot stress this enough.
- Lot of encouragement from instructors.

Participants agreed that well written resumes and knowledge of how to participate in an interview are vital to finding employment in Canada.

In developing a plan to help a new immigrant woman make the transition to employment, the participants offered suggestions to help one of the participants in the study secure full-time employment.

- Persistence.

- Answering service that lists jobs.
- Specific times when they are put up, you have to be real fast and go in and enter so they call you in for an interview.
- First impression is very important, fake it till you make it.
- Don't get down, you have to be enthusiastic.
- Think he is just another person and not the end of the world, if I get the job I get it, otherwise there is another chance, there is always another chance, don't make yourself, don't give up, don't stress yourself before you go in for an interview.
- They don't, so many times, they don't know how to carry conversation, they sit there and wait for you to talk, have a talk prepared, write it down what you want to get across and write down that you want to tell them that you're proficient, you can start a job and can finish a job, and that you want to work and you can work overtime and write it down so when both of you are silent, because that will happen, you can put something in.
- Yes, you can even joke along with them.
- You have to, hard to pick up the phone, tell me about it.
- Keep everything open, people know you are looking for a job, think of interviewer as just another guy.

- If you don't understand ask them again.
- Don't mention the word English. Double underline that.
- If you doubt yourself, you've lost it.
- And if you keep not getting a job, it is in a recession, it isn't you personally, if this was '85 '86 you'd be snapped up, so it is hard and don't take it personally.
- The more interviews you go to the better and more relaxed you get.

Participants agreed that it is important for immigrant women to be prepared for interviews, confident about English skills and persistent in their job search to obtain employment.

Deterrents to Employment

Participants commented on the deterrents to securing employment in Canada.

- Qualified but cannot find jobs.
- Can't find a job, need Canadian experience. It is really a problem.
- Not enough experience.
- Unless you have the skill in the kind of employment you are looking for.
- Polish, it's not easy to find a job for us, it's not.
- Rather hire Canadians than immigrants because of course immigrants don't have problems with English.

- So unsure of English, couldn't wait on customers.
- English not perfect
- Have to learn English first.
- Always difficult for immigrant to get a job because of problem with language.
- When an employer sees two people, two tradesmen, one speaks English, one does not, then which one would he choose, the one who speaks the language.
- Racial or something.

When asked what would go against you the most in finding a job, one participant commented about the lack of "English, of course" and other participants agreed. The need to be qualified, need for Canadian experience and the possibility of discrimination were also suggested.

Motivators to Employment

Participants commented on the motivators or ways to secure employment in Canada.

- The school found me my job actually.
- Because of my job training, I got this job.
- Knowing resumes, how to present it, defend what's there, present yourself, that's the important step to get into the door and it's then up to you.
- Some people have very good English and have no problem to find a job.
- Most important is English, even get a job, school, the main thing is English.

- The training helped me find employment.

English skills, training and/or education, and resume and interview skills were identified by the participants as necessities to finding employment in Canada.

Need for Employment

Motivation to secure employment, in part, is influenced by the participants' need for employment for financial security to build a future for their families.

Lack of Information

In addition to a lack of English skills, participants described a lack of information as a difficulty an immigrant woman would experience in Canada in adjusting to the culture, in obtaining training and securing employment.

- She wouldn't know how to get a phone, where to go find a place, which part to be aware of, which part of the city is affordable, what school she is going to, where is the bus system, how to get there. People are so dependent on a vehicle around here. You cannot walk. Who to call, who to talk to, how to get there, how is she going to get from point A to point B, where she can find housing and what schools might be available. Three basic needs - schooling, housing and transportation need to be met.
- She wouldn't be familiar with banking machines, vending machines, money machines.

- Lack of information.
- Unless you ask for it, then they recommend courses.
- Need to know way around city.
- Make more friends, get more information from friends. Co-worker told me about [course], it was a fluke, it was luck.
- I didn't know where to go, what to do.
- I was together with other friends at their home and I met her there, and she told me she finished this course.
- UIC office referred and that was helpful.

To overcome the lack of available information identified by the participants, the participants offered suggestions to new immigrant women. "Learn to drive," or "learn the transit system," to be able to get around; "open eyes and ears, listen to what's going on, read the paper, listen to friends, make friends or acquaintances, a next friend," "take little jobs which you're not quite happy with but you know, still you earn enough so you can look around," and contact your Canada Employment Centre office.

Participants based their suggestions on their experiences of making contact with the office systems training program registrar and following up leads for employment: by calling number after number in the phone book gathering information from each person until contact

was made; from Canada Employment Centre counselor referrals; through friends and coworkers, and reading and watching the media.

English, Education, Employment

Women who immigrate to Canada must adjust to the environment of the new country and are influenced, often in subtle ways, by the values of the family in which they were raised. In coping with the new environment, which from the moment of arrival in Canada focuses on learning English, going to school, and finding a job; the immigrant women may, indeed, be quite handicapped and experience many deterrents.

Deterrents

As shown in Tables 10, participants experienced deterrents while making the transition to employment through an office systems training program.

Age and time were identified as deterrents, too little time in life to return to school, too old to be hired.

Participants stated that they extend their homes to family members and sponsor relatives to Canada while assuming a shared financial responsibility making funding for training or further education difficult and paid employment necessary. Regardless of whether funding or loan guidelines consider a parent a dependent or not, the

participants stated that they need to assume financial support for their parents while attending school.

Table 10

Needs/Deterrents/Motivators - English/Education/Employment

English	Education	Employment
	Need for	
Lack of English skills alienate person - needed to overcome home-sickness, Need English to adjust to culture and communicate, English prereq for training/education Need English to gain equal opportunities in the workplace.	English as prereq to training or further education, To upgrade skills/ obtain Canadian credentials, To learn self-marketing and confidence, Practice English Need to succeed for children's future.	Financial security, Resources to contact home or visit to appease homesickness, Offer future for family, Need Canadian experience.
	Deterrents	
Hard to learn when older, Extended families less practice English, Taking course financial burden, Pronunciation, Listening comprehension, Social communication, Learning alphabet, Can't hear own accent, Lack of information.	Too old, Lifetime running out, Scheduling, Recognition of credentials, Encouragement of males into education, Lack of information, Financial burden, Dependent parents, Lack of confidence.	Too old to be hired, Financial pressure Adjustment to pace, work ethics, Need English and training to compete, Need Canadian experience, Experience not recognized, Discrimination, Lack of information, Resume/interview system of obtaining employment.

table continues

English	Education	Employment
	Motivators	
In extended families more opportunity to speak native language, In extended families opportunity to help relatives with English, Government funding, TV shows, Talking to people, Someone to listen to your English, Tapes, Media.	Maturity, self-esteem, enthusiasm. Willingness, ability to adjust. Extended family - build in child care, Fear raising children native country, Government funding, Employable skills, Rebel against support for males.	Maturity, self-esteem, confidence, enthusiasm, Willingness, readiness, ability to adjust to changes, Fear of returning to home country, Need to build a future for family, Multiculturalism to avoid homesickness, Persistence, Office systems training program, CEC counsellors, Money.

Homesickness, considered a deterrent, was felt to some degree by each participant. Participants state that lack of English skills alienate the immigrant women and the feeling of homesickness is then stronger. Financing telephone calls and overseas visits becomes a strain on the family resources at a time when the immigrant women need to be in school learning English and retraining to become employable in Canada. Making the transition to employment in Canada is difficult when immigrant women are faced with meeting new friends and contacts and adjusting to the new culture.

English skills were identified by the participants as a major deterrent. Acquiring English skills at an older age was considered difficult by the participants. Honing pronunciation, listening comprehension and socially accepted communication skills were deterrents in becoming fluent in English. Participants stated that English was difficult to learn, but that it must be learned in order to enter training or further education because the curriculum and method of delivery is in English. Participants also stated that immigrant women need English skills to have the same opportunity as Canadian women who are fluent in English in competing for employment.

Deterrents to obtaining education or training were identified by the participants: problems of returning to school at an older age, lack of English skills, the scheduling of courses, unfair or lack of recognition of credentials, difficulty locating programs, financial burden, and lack of confidence. However, the immigrant women insist that upgrading of skills, security of Canadian credentials, network of contacts, confidence and improved English are vital to securing employment.

Deterrents to obtaining employment were identified by the participants: difficulty of older workers finding employment; lack of English skills, Canadian training or education; unfair recognition of experience and credentials; difficulty locating employment;

discrimination; inability to handle interview situations and poor resume portfolio. Participants are adamant that immigrant women need English skills and training to secure employment.

Motivators

As shown in Table 10, participants identified motivators. To cope with deterrents, the participants in the study suggest that new immigrant women maintain their confidence and enthusiasm and be persistent in seeking information and finding opportunities.

Participants identified motivators in the study. Confidence and self-esteem, afforded the participants by maturity and upbringing, provided the motivation to overcome age, time and discrimination when acquiring English skills, obtaining training or furthering education and applying for and securing employment.

Extended families are in a better position to offer cost-effective built-in child care during the day and assistance with children in the evening if the participant needs time for further study. Extended families also offer opportunities for participants to reinforce their own language skills by helping other family members acquire English. Opportunity to speak one's native language in an extended family situation, multicultural programs, and resources from employment that can provide funds for travel or telephone contact appease homesickness.

The fear of raising children in the participants' home country provided the motivation to emigrate. Freedom as a person and a woman, education and employment opportunities, and a bright future for children act as motivators for pursuing English, education and employment for the benefit of the next generation. Rebelling against the myth that "men are always better than women" acted as a motivator to achieve.

Motivators that helped with the acquisition of English were TV programs, the media, opportunity to use both languages in the home, English coursework, people who will listen, listening to tapes, and lots of practice.

Completing the educational training program provided Canadian credentials and employable skills to secure employment. The government provided funding for English and training courses to ease the financial burden. Office systems training provided computer training, employable skills, English, confidence and self marketing tools.

Making new friends, making contact with agencies and services, listening, reading and having the persistence willingness, readiness and ability to adjust were suggestions by the participants to overcome the lack of information available for new immigrant women making the transition to employment through an office systems training program.

Summary

Short biographies of participants were presented to give the reader a better understanding of the findings in context. The findings were reported and described and included direct quotations which reflected the participants' experiences of making the transition to employment through an office systems training program.

Participants identified deterrents associated with their need to acquire English and education and to secure employment: English - comprehension and pronunciation; Training or Education - lack of English, scheduling, credential recognition and funding; and Employment - lack of English and/or education, discrimination, recognition of past experience and difficulty with interviews and resumes.

Influences of cultural and family values, handicaps of homesickness and loss of identify, deterrents and motivators that directly affect the acquisition of English, education and employment, and a lack of information available to new immigrant women emerged from the findings.

Participants described confidence and enthusiasm as that which a new immigrant woman would need to persevere to acquire English, education and employment in Canada.

CHAPTER 5

Emerging Factors

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to give a voice to immigrant women who have persevered to become Canadians and who enlighten the road for others who follow in their footsteps. The purpose echoes Emelia's conclusion that immigrant women need to be informed:

> I've been through it, and I know, I know what she can take. I'm informed. I mean, that's all, that's the biggest issue, being informed and knowing where to go, who to talk to, when to go, how to go and so on. So in that way she wouldn't feel lost.

New immigrant women must face the basic needs of housing, transportation, financial support and food before looking to communicate with people and organizations and to locate English courses, schooling, training or retraining, and/or employment. Persistence is their necessary tool to overcome the lack of information - knowing who to talk to, when to talk, or how to talk.

Characteristics of Participants

The selected group of immigrant women who participated in this study experienced alienation, loss of identity, homesickness and influences by their culture and family

values in acquiring English skills, completing training and making the transition to employment or further education.

In examining the coping skills of these immigrant women in overcoming the deterrents to making the transition to employment or further education, perseverance appears the prevailing characteristic of each individual. Hanks (1986) defined perseverance as a "continued steady belief or efforts, withstanding discouragement or difficulty" (p. 1144), a trait or behavior that cannot be understood without a glimpse at the individual's character or qualities of the family background. Factors that appear to contribute to the immigrant women's perseverance are their reasons for immigrating, positive feelings regarding discrimination, their need to communicate in the English language and their desire to become employed in Canada. The immigrant women's confidence appears to provide the basis for their ability to persevere.

The six immigrant women who were interviewed, rather than being unique, were instead, typical of Canadian immigrants looking back over several generations. These six immigrant women are now Canadians citizens. The six immigrant women admire and like Canada; they are hard-working, self-reliant, determined to achieve, humorous, harmonious with the community in which they live, helpful to the less fortunate members of their families, devoted to raising and educating their children in Canada and to their

own upgrading through various Canadian courses of study. The attributes of the immigrant women are how we remember the olden day pioneer and early immigrant women. We forget how pioneer women and early immigrant women also experienced many of the same difficulties, discrimination and hard times as our six immigrant women. It is ironic and unfair that present-day immigrant women are not accorded the same respect and esteem during their struggle as we bestow now on the oft-praised, olden day pioneers.

Experiences Making the Transition

One specific research question is addressed in this study: What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education through a selected office systems training program in a private vocational school? The response is drawn from comments and descriptions given by the immigrant women who participated in the program and from the researcher's observations.

Deterrents and motivators emerged out of the participants' experiences with regard to English, education and employment and are further complicated by influences and handicaps. To enter education or training programs, English is a prerequisite; and to obtain employment, English skills and Canadian education or training are necessary.

English

English communication skills are necessary for immigrant women to integrate into the community in which they live, to understand instruction and course content in training and educational programs, and to meet employer's expectations in business and the workplace. Achieving fluency in English is a major, although not the only deterrent, to successful integration into Canadian society, a process which is stressful, enervating, and costly in energy and emotions.

Pronunciation and listening comprehension were suggested by the participants as the most difficult aspects of learning the language as well as social skills such as what questions to ask, of whom and where; skills not always fully acquired in some ESL studies. Laghi (1991) quoted Laura Ho, an educational and vocational counsellor at Edmonton Catholic Social Services, who suggested that some ESL courses are often "too short," for students to acquire more than "survival English" (p. A8).

Participants stated that dictionaries were difficult for them to understand pronunciation. Most dictionaries give an IPA key to pronunciation with each word which can be difficult to decipher. The International Phonetic Alphabet or IPA key is a "series of signs and letters propagated by the Association Phonetique Internationale for the representation of human speech sounds" (Hanks, 1986, p.

796). For example, the IPA key to help pronounce the word *insupportable* is shown as ˌinsəˈpɔ:təbˇl (Hanks, 1986, p. 791) and it would be ponderous and difficult for immigrant people to understand, if the interpretation and training are not included in their ESL course of studies.

Participants expressed difficulty in understanding English. One participant commented that she experiences many misunderstandings when she listens to the English language. She cited the word can't, as in the phrase can't go. The t is difficult, if not impossible for her to hear and she doesn't know if she can or can't go. Breaks in communication for people learning English often occur when they are not trained to listen to stretches of continuous speech. Words in English are not said separately as they are written, they are linked together. Those learning English should be taught to hear the linking so they can become more fluent speaking and understanding English (Is he busy? becomes izzybizzy; and ice cream become I scream) (Gilbert, 1984, p. 62 - 64).

Participants identified pronunciation as a major difficulty. For those who experience difficulty in pronunciation, it would be helpful to know how to adjust from a usual tongue position and mouth placement of a native language to a more suitable tongue position and mouth placement to correctly pronounce the English language. Tongue position and mouth placement in English

is important for new Canadians to know so they can have a choice of how to make the sounds, and the ability to improve their communication in English (P. Kayne, personal communication, August 1991).

The sounds of the English language described by the participant as a continuous flow of sound will continue to sound that way until one can distinguish the separate written words within the linked spoken English. There was some relief from the constant barrage of the harsh and difficult sounds of a foreign language for five of the six immigrants interviewed. Each of these had been sponsored by someone already established in Canada and in whose home naturally the native language was spoken. While this provided a break from the unending effort to understand and to speak the new language (as did the availability of various ethnic and cultural organizations,) it did inhibit, to some degree, the faster acquisition of English.

Although participants felt strongly that the use of a dictionary, pronunciation, listening comprehension and social skills related to English were deterrents to acquiring the language, they did say that watching comedy and interview shows on television in a comfortable setting of their own home, reading newspapers, and talking to friends and people in their community were of great assistance.

The acquisition of English is a necessary component of any educational or training program that the immigrant women enroll in and a necessity to actively participate in the workplace. Difficulties encountered in listening comprehension and pronunciation are magnified by the complexity of the material and concepts that Canadians just assume that "everybody knows" in the educational or training process. In Gilbert (1990), a student commented that "difficulties are in inverse proportion to [their] strength in English" (p. 2). Immigrant women could benefit from Canadian accent practice to enhance their listening comprehension and pronunciation skills to succeed in educational and employment settings.

Education

Educational or training programs are necessary for immigrant women to acquire Canadian credentials, to upgrade or acquire new skills, to learn to job search and market self, and to practice English. Immigrant women need to acquire English skills and education or training to meet the qualifications expected by employers.

Scheduling of courses, the lack of recognition of homeland credentials, the structure and timetabling of education courses and the devaluation of transferable skills need to be addressed by administrators in the planning stages of adult education.

The curriculum and training in the selected office systems training program received accolades for its integrated system of training. English is a co-requisite rather than a prerequisite in the office systems program. English (spelling, punctuation and grammar) is integrated into the practical exercises in the curriculum and written instructions or theory is pre-empted with hands-on instruction or personalized skill training. Offering the program in a professional business environment enhances verbal communication, business manners and English social skills. This process of training accommodates people whose English is not the first language, transfers employable skills to the trainees and fulfils the philosophy of the school to provide training needed for employment.

Participated stated that males were encouraged into education and training programs over females. Immigrant women in this study serve as role models for their daughters, sisters, mothers and other immigrant women to achieve personal educational goals by returning to and completing educational programs, sharing financial and head of the household responsibilities, making compromises raising children in the Canadian culture, bearing and raising children in Canada, and furthering their own education and status in the workplace.

Immigrant families are in financial need to secure employment; however, immigrant women need to enroll first

in funded English and training programs. For most training programs more than one year in duration, financial assistance is only available through student loans. Shorter full-time programs are available with government sponsorship of tuition and a minimum training allowance. However, the applicant must first meet the criteria for the training program (including English), obtain acceptance and be recommended for sponsorship, before their name is placed on a waiting list for both an opening in the program and funding. Training and education in Canada is necessary to secure employment.

Employment

Participants' comments suggested that the major goal of immigrant women is to secure employment; however, immigrant women are faced with a lack of English skills, and unrecognized education, training or experience from their home country. Immigrant women also experience subtle discrimination in the workplace, cultural differences in applying for employment, lack of information and financial pressures.

Discrimination is perceived as a deterrent in the workplace for immigrant women, immigrant women who essentially resemble Canadian women far more than they differ. Multiculturalism represents an amalgamation of the strengths and traditions of new immigrants with the values and established ideals of Canadians. However, terms such

as "new Canadians," "visible minority" and now "invisible minority" creep into the Canadian vocabulary and are used in a pejorative sense - often to say that there are too many immigrants here and discrimination in employment is much more systemic. That is, immigrant women do not know why a dissonant accent arouses a feeling of aversion, why they have to be twice as good to be as good, or why color matters so much when under a minute millimetre of skin people are much the same.

Discrimination also exists with regard to women's rights. Women are considered equal but they are not treated equally. Immigrant women in this study looked through a "glass ceiling" in the workplace, seeing men and very few women above them on the corporate ladder. Somehow they are unable to climb the rungs; it seems that regardless of qualifications, as women, they can't break through the system to these promotions and to these more responsible positions. All participants agreed that a woman, especially an immigrant woman, must be "twice as good to get the same promotions men do," and that it is "much harder for women, no matter how good you are."

Immigrant women are "willing to start from the bottom level." The term "women refugees" conjures up images of "just refugees" rather than women in growth and change who are bringing a wealth of talents to Canada. Immigrant women have had to give up their previous employment,

experience and expertise from their home country to enter the Canadian workforce where credentials and experience are seldom recognized.

The discrimination immigrant women experience as an immigrant and as a woman is based on stereotyping. The Hanks (1986) definition of stereotype is a "standardized image or conception shared by all members of a social group" (p. 1496). What people do is fit immigrant women into a stereotype from information and experiences that they believe to be true. Tice (1990) believes that people have goals, and that they need to visualize their goals to acquire "strong positive feelings that accompanies success" to supply "drive and energy" to accomplish them (p. 9-2). Immigrant women in this study were able to use positive self-talk to acquire the "drive and energy" to accomplish their goals and to ignore stereotypes.

The European immigrant women's cultures and upbringing are in conflict with the idea of "self-marketing" for employment; praising yourself is thought to be rude. Believing that "what's inside that counts" is therefore in sharp contrast to the selling yourself format in resumes, in covering letters, and in interview situations. Once employed in Canada, the immigrant women must also adjust to the pace, work ethics and self-marketing approach to promotions.

Participants' comments of stumbling onto training programs and finding employment by "fluke" or "good luck," indicates a lack of information available to immigrant women on accessing services in Edmonton.

Immigrant women are often faced with accepting employment in low paying service sector positions to meet financial obligations because of a lack of English skills and recognized training and/or education; yet their goal is to acquire full-time employment relevant to their qualifications or new goals.

English, Education, Employment

The immigrant women are in a "catch 22" situation of needing to be employed to support self and others yet needing to be enrolled in English courses and education or training programs. Immigrant women need to work to have a constant source of income; but they can't secure work without having the English and education and will not qualify for education or training programs without English. Therefore, the immigrant women are often forced to accept low-paying service sector positions.

The immigrant women in this study recognized and overcame the "catch 22" situation. It would be to the immigrant women's advantage to take some English classes before emigrating and to take ESL courses as soon as possible after they have settled in Canada. Immigrant

women could then secure part-time employment that they could qualify for without credential and experience recognition and limited English, and continue with ESL courses. The immigrant women could then make contacts and applications for funded education or training programs to gain employable skills and an opportunity to enhance English. Once the immigrant women secure full-time employment based on recent training or education, they could then give up their part-time work, and set new goals to further their education or careers.

Cultural and Family Influences

Immigrant women are influenced by cultural and family values from their native country. This is evident in the adjustments and compromises they make during the transition into Canadian culture.

Participants' comments described females in the family that were deprived, in some measure, of the independence assumed for males, and a low socio-economic background which necessitated perseverance through challenging circumstances to achieve a better life. Conversely, immigrants from middle class families encouraged a positive attitude towards their daughters' aspirations for independence, education and employment.

Participants indicated that families and friends are closer knit and more interdependent in their home country

than in Canada, where space, economic resources and mobility have created the rise of the nuclear family. Participants mentioned strong ties to the grandmother, sometimes on a level more intense than for the mother, indicating not only filial attachment - but intergenerational appreciation for what was absorbed and learned from that family member. The single immigrant women assumed responsibility for the support of their mothers both in nuclear and extended family situations. The married immigrant women contributed to the family income. The single participants stated a need for shared or equal responsibilities of the household.

Handicaps of Homesickness, Loss of Identity

Below the surface, lay a pervasive anomie - a longing for the familiarities of family and society left behind. In this sample of six women, homesickness was recalled quite openly by the European women who spoke of crying "for months" and of scrimping in order to save money for phone calls home. Despite the fact, that all (but one) of the women were sponsored by relatives, fiances or friends, all six women experienced lengthy periods of disorientation, anxiety and isolation.

These feelings persist in some measure after four or five years in Edmonton and are connected with a loss of identity. In their home country, the immigrant women (one

emigrated as a teen) had university degrees or college diplomas which are not given recognition in Alberta and therefore are meaningless. In their home country, the immigrant women spoke at least two languages with ease, and now mastery of English is a major problem. At home they held positions of some status and self-esteem in society which afforded them a particular lifestyle in the community while those positions in the Canadian workplace have eluded them. Because of their accent or appearance they are frequently asked where they are from and though the question is put kindly, it reinforces their feeling of apartness. In a way they are all still in the process of reconstructing a new identity.

Motivation

The immigrant women believe their perseverance stems from their confidence, confidence in themselves. They believe this confidence "comes from within but is nurtured from outside, from books, reading, relating, caring." It comes from "believing in yourself," "understanding yourself;" it comes from "love, from someone who believes in you, encouragement;" it comes from "dealing with each situation as it comes, my family has a lot to do with that;" "my mother, my grandmother, my teacher - role models that I admired and showed me that you could be better, should be better, can be different, should be different,

teachers are a big influence;" and it comes from "daughters (who) believe you can do anything."

Examining the findings, the writer surmises that the perseverance also comes from their reasons for immigrating; from wanting to bear, raise children and build a homelife in Canada; and the pursuit of peace and prosperity within our nation. This force to succeed is enhanced by their belief that their children's futures are in Canada and that they need to plant seeds for their children or grandchildren. This overpowering drive is enough to turn deterrents into motivators.

Goals and Aspirations

All participants in the study focused on self-improvement through education or career development as part of their goals or aspirations including "university," "estate officer," "business training," "accounting," "career like in Poland," and "educate myself." One participant involved travel with her career plans, using her ability to communicate in more than one language. Immigrant women achieve their goals to become Canadians by setting small steps: becoming fluent in English, training, and securing employment. Once this goal is a reality new educational, business and personal goals are set.

Summary

Perseverance is the prevailing characteristic of the immigrant women who are dedicated and committed to settling and raising and educating their children in Canada. English, including pronunciation and comprehension, is a necessity in educational settings; and education or training in Canada is required to gain credentials, to upgrade or acquire new skills, to learn to job search and to practice English in preparation for employment. Immigrant women must also overcome discrimination, cultural and family influences, homesickness, loss of identify, and lack of information to achieve their goal of making the transition to employment in Canada.

CHAPTER 6

Recommendations and Comments

Recommendations and Practical Strategies from Participants

English as a second language programs offer English to multicultural groups of immigrant women. The participants in this study suggest the need to offer English to oriental immigrant women in a separate group because oriental immigrant people need to learn how to form letters of the alphabet, and change their thinking from pictured words to a gathering of letters; whereas other groups already know how to draw letters and put letters together into words in their own language.

The participants in this study offered practical strategies to ease an immigrant woman's transition to employment or further education in Canada by offering "words of wisdom," "advice," and "contacts or connections." The lack of information recurs in the critical areas of financial support, acquisition of English skills, education and employment from the moment an immigrant woman arrives in Canada. Strategies to overcome the lack of information include: (1) Words of wisdom - Maintain the enthusiasm that you arrived with, be persistent in finding opportunities and keep yourself informed. (2) Advice - Listen, read and watch the media, talk to people, make acquaintances, ask lots of questions, telephone agencies to seek financial

assistance, secure housing in the best neighbourhood you can afford, become mobile using the public transportation system, learn to drive, obtain employment to get you started, seek training or education, learn where and how to shop. Learn to market yourself and practice using your English. (3) Contacts or Connections - Canada Employment Centre, Alberta Career Development and Employment office, multicultural organizations, churches, or social services for information.

Recommendations for Action Based on Study

English pronunciation and verbal comprehension are critical segments in empowering our ever growing immigrant population. The discrepancy between the written word and the spoken word, referenced in this study, suggests a need for accent reduction and verbal comprehension programs. Immigrant people have difficulty understanding rapid speech because rapid speech sounds very little like their understanding of its written counterpart, and the metaphorical component of English, the idioms and colloquialisms, must each be learned. The words themselves carry very little meaning; the need exists to learn "how" to put the words together to produce functional and conversant speakers of English. It is reasonable to conclude, based upon the data supplied by the participants, that verbal comprehension and pronunciation of English

might be further developed by stressing the importance of the Canadian accent.

"Information poverty" outlined by the women immigrants in the study suggest a need for the identification of centralized information with regard to relocation, mobility, educational facilities, educational or training opportunities and registration, credential and experience recognition and employment opportunities. The participants' knowledge of the immigration process is intense now; but their difficulties in the beginning would have been less if they had more knowledge. "Immigrant women are flexible, eager to open their minds to new things, more likely not to give up; but, without information, are more vulnerable" (Emelia).

The participants, who completed training programs and entered the workforce in 1989, did not identify a central support system for immigrant women. However, a non-profit organization, "Changing Together . . . A Centre for Immigrant Women," has become more active in providing a bridging program or "a place where immigrant women can meet people, learn crafts, improve their English, make new friends and integrate into Canadian society. The centre provides information, referral, and training important to newcomers and citizens alike," and "they have 12 to 15 translated languages for workshops, pamphlets and speakers" (Kaiser, 1991, p. 8). However, the executive director of

Changing Together states there is still a tremendous need for advocacy, liaison with government and networking with other agencies and ethnic groups working with immigrant women, and interaction or networking within the immigrant women themselves (Nena Jocic-Andrejevic, personal communication, March 31, 1992) to help bridge the gap for immigrant women to make the transition to further education or employment.

The participants stated that the Office Systems training course they completed which integrated English into the program opened up avenues to employment and further education which in turn provided time and money to expand on their career goals and aspirations. The participants' comments suggest a need for skill training that includes English as a co-requisite. The Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, recently commenced a new English as a co-requisite "one-year program for [twenty] immigrant women to train in non-traditional trades like carpentry and painting" with "English, math and science" tutorials to help with the writing of the apprenticeship exam (Bowers, 1992, p. 4). Because seats are limited and immigrant women applicants are plentiful, there is a need for program evaluation and follow-up studies to better market similar programs to the funding bodies.

Participants' comments suggest a need for centralized credential and experience recognition. A representative of

the Professional and Occupational Bureau with the Government of Alberta stated there is a need for a central clearing house for foreign qualifications or credentials in Alberta (C. McNichol, personal communication, March 31, 1992). The *Bridging the Gap* (1992) report, released June 10, 1992 and compiled by the Task Force on Recognition of Foreign Qualifications confirms the need and recommends "that the Government of Alberta establish an information centre, available to all Albertans including immigrants and other Canadians" (p. viii).

Recommendations for Further Study

The *Bridging the Gap* (1992) report, released June 10, 1992, included submissions from more than 300 individuals and groups. The individuals and groups who met the Task Force represented immigrant professionals who possessed some postsecondary education or trade certification (C. McNichol, personal communication, June 22, 1992). It is recommended that the *Bridging the Gap* (1992) study be expanded to include the qualifications and credentials of immigrant workers "in the working age group of 15 to 44 years . . . with only high school or less education" and who represented "60 percent" of the individuals who immigrated to Alberta in 1989 (p. 26).

European immigrant women in this study took a more passive role in securing employment in their home country,

expecting their qualifications to speak for themselves. Here in Canada, they had to learn to self-market themselves to employers through resumes, application forms, covering letters and in interviews. It would be interesting to determine if European immigrant men from the same home countries take the same passive role in securing employment. If the men do not take a passive role, a further study would be recommended to determine if the male self-marketing and women's passive role would have an affect on the "glass ceiling" scenario of men securing more responsible positions then women and women having to be "twice as good to get the same position" (Emelia).

Crawford's (1989) study showed that women in China do not tend to "aspire to enter the male dominated professions of science and technology due to their socialization process, whereby they become victims of sex-stereotyping, and also because their formal schooling discourages rather than encourages them to enter these professions" (p. v). Oriental immigrant women participants in the present study stated that they were made to think that "men are always better than women." Further study is recommended to see if oriental women from first generation and second generation families in Canada feel they are as important as the men or if more educational privileges are accorded males than females in their culture.

Comments from the European immigrant women who participated in this study suggest the need for further study of discrimination of "invisible minorities." The Public Service Commission strives to be "fully representative of the public it serves" through "representation of groups targeted by Employment Equity Programs in the Public Service of Canada" including visible minorities. Visible minorities, regardless of place of birth, were identified as Black, Chinese, Filipino, South Asian (Indo-Pakistani), Japanese, Korean, South-East Asian (Burmese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, etc.), West Asian, North African, Latin American, Oceanic (Polynesian, Micronesian, Melanesian, etc.), Persons of mixed race or color, and Other Visible Minority Groups (Application for Employment Form coded 3268-B(02-92)). A visible minorities employment coordinator with the Public Service Commission of Canada confirmed that European immigrant women are not included on the list, but that anyone can claim that they are a visible minority. However, only those listed as visible minorities are considered in the Employment Equity program. In this regard, a task force or study is recommended (starting with the Public Service Commission) to evaluate employment equity programs, programs which should promote equitable participation of the population it serves including European immigrant women.

Multiculturalism is seen by the participants as a way to appease homesickness and feel comfortable in Canada. However, some Canadians feel that "multiculturalism demands too much adjustment by Canadians and too little by immigrants" and that immigrants must take more responsibility to learn English or French and to respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Immigrant women in this study persevered to enhance English skills, to further their education or training to secure employment because they believed in themselves. Canadians, too, must believe in and respect the immigrant women and "help them to integrate" (Ingram, 1992, p. 56).

Summary

An English course targeted at immigrants who are not familiar with the alphabet is recommended by participants. Practical strategies to ease an immigrant woman's transition to employment or further education include the need to maintain enthusiasm, be informed, become mobile, and acquire English and training for employment. Areas of recommended action include: English accent courses, expanded central support systems, English as co-requisite, and need for credential and experience recognition. Further studies are recommended in the following areas: The European approach to securing employment; the effect the female passive role/male self-marketing role would have

on promotions in the workplace; the women's educational privileges in oriental families in Canada; "invisible minorities"; and effects of multiculturalism.

Comments

Qualitative methodology was chosen by the researcher because it closely matched the intent of the study to determine what a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education through a selected training program. Manuals and handbooks were used to guide the researcher through the study, browsing first, then honing in on each unit as the researcher planned the next step. The researcher's approach is recognized and supported by Miles and Huberman (1984) "read particular sections focusing on upcoming analysis tasks" (p. 24). Although qualitative research studies take a substantial amount of time and effort, I would recommend it to those who seek joy in the work itself. It is my hope that the reader will pick up on the enlightenment the work brought to the researcher.

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Appendix 1

Private Vocational School Request

[Date]

[Name Private Vocational College]
[Address]
[City, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am presently conducting a study through the Adult, Career and Technology Education department at the University of Alberta in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education. The focus of the study is on the experiences of immigrant women in the transition to employment once they have completed a private vocational office systems training program.

I would like to select a sample group of graduates from your private vocational college to participate in my study. I am requesting permission to access your private vocational college records to select immigrant women who are presently employed or furthering their education and who graduated from the 1988 - 1989 office systems graduating class. The selection should take two to three hours to peruse your 1988 - 1989 records. After a sample of women are selected, a letter requesting their participation will be mailed to them guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Participants will be requested to sign a release of information form giving access to demographic data in their records.

Would you please confirm your approval through a letter of authorization to access records to obtain names of prospective participants as well as to access participant's records for demographic data.

Yours truly,

Cheryel Goodale
Department of Adult, Career and Technology Education
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta

Appendix 2

Participant Request

[Date]

[Name of Participant]
[Address]
[City, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear [Name of Participant]:

As part of my studies at the University of Alberta, I am conducting a study. My study is about the experiences of immigrant women who have graduated from an office systems training program and who are now employed. I am requesting that you assist me by taking part in my study. My research study question is "What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment through an office systems training program."

Because, [name of participant], you are a graduate of the office systems training program, I am requesting that you consider meeting with me to tell me about some of your experiences. Your time, your information and your opinions will be most valued and will be included in the results of the study; but your name and the information you give me will not be disclosed. A fictitious or pseudonym will be used in the study in place of your name. Your name, the training program, the school, any names and addresses you might mention will not be disclosed. The information you give will be held in confidence to the study. A copy of the study will be available for you at your request. If you do take part in my study, you may terminate or withdraw from the interview and from the study at any time by contacting me by telephone or meeting with me in person.

Please contact me at [business phone] during the day or at [residence phone] in the evening to let me know if you are interested in taking part in my study or not; or if you would like to ask me questions. I will also attempt to reach you by telephone to confirm your interest in participating in the study. If you agree to take part in the study we will set up an interview date and time for us to sit down and talk about the study and the release of information form to be signed.

Yours in education,

Cheryel Goodale

Appendix 3

Release of Information Form

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM / INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: Perseverance of Immigrant Women
Investigator's Name: Cheryel Goodale

This is to certify that I, _____ , hereby agree to take part in the research study conducted by the investigator, Cheryel Goodale. The purpose of the study is to obtain information about a selected group of immigrant women's experiences of making the transition to employment through a selected private vocational office systems training program.

1. I consent to participate in a recorded interview.

2. I understand that I am free to deny answers to questions I prefer not to answer.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the interview and/or study at any time by letting the investigator know in person or by telephone.

4. I understand my name will not be disclosed at any time.

5. I understand that any names and addresses I might mention in the interview will not be disclosed and that information will be kept confidential to the study.

6. I understand that the name of the school will not be disclosed.

7. I understand the tape will be erased at the conclusion of the study.

8. I understand that the results of the study will be made available to me if I wish.

9. I have been given the opportunity to ask whatever questions I desire and all such questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

10. I understand that I will keep a copy of this form and the investigator, Cheryel Goodale, will keep a copy of this form.

11. I agree to allow the investigator to obtain information from my private vocational school records.

_____
Signature of Participant

_____
Date

_____
Signature of Investigator

_____
Date

Appendix 4

Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Participant: Date: Start time: End Time: Setting:

Discuss the background and focus of the study - What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education possible through a selected office systems training program in a private vocational school?

Discuss need for and location of camcorder and tape recorder, "off the record" comments, right to stop equipment, confidentiality of tapes, reiteration of points in release of information.

Query #1
How can the participants be described and what are their general characteristics?

1. What is your marital status?
2. Do you have any children? (daughters or sons, ages)
3. Do you have any dependents who are not your children?
4. How long have you been in Edmonton?
5. How long did it take to emigrate to Canada from the time when you first decided to come to the time you became a landed immigrant?
6. What route did you take to Edmonton?
7. Why did you emigrate to Canada? (refugee or immigrant)
8. What country were you born in?
9. What country did you emigrate from?
10. How old were you when you emigrated.
11. Which members of your immediate family are still attempting to emigrate to Canada? (spouse, children, brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, children).
    In your home country (country you considered home before emigrating to Canada):
12. Were you in a nuclear family (spouse/children) or were you in an extended family (with grandparents, aunts, uncles, other).
13. Who was (were) the head of the household? (financial, family).
14. What relationship to you was (were) the head of the household?
15. What responsibilities did the head(s) of the household assume? (financial, family)
16. Who contributed to bringing in income?
17. Did any of these responses change after you settled in Canada and before you made the transition to employment?
18. Did any of these responses change after you settled in Canada and after you made the transition to employment?

Query #2
Acquisition of Language

1. What language did you first learn in childhood that you still understand?

2. How many ESL courses have you been registered in?

3. Which languages can you communicate verbally in? (read, write)?

4. If you understood English before you arrived, who did you learn the language from and how?

5. When you were in school, what was the language of instruction?

6. What (deterrents/motivators) did you experience learning the language?

Notes:

Query #3a
Deterrents to Training/Education

1. What deterrents with regard to training/education did you experience? How did you handle each situation?
(examples to clarify question - educational status and language eof schooling in home country; recognition of credentials; courses/training in Canada; present educational status; responsibility for childcare, homecare, familycare, financial, scheduling, transportation, other during training)

Notes:

Query 3b
Motivators to Training/Education

1. What motivators with regard to training and education did you experience? How did you handle each situation?
(examples to clarify question - educational status and language of schooling in home country; recognition of credentials; courses/training in Canada; present educational status; responsibility for childcare, homecare, familycare, financial, scheduling, transportation, other during training)

Notes:

Query #4a
Deterrents to Employment

1. What deterrents regarding employment did you experience? How did you handle each of these experiences? (examples to clarify question - employment history home country, employment history Canada, responsibility for childcare, homecare, familycare, financial, scheduling, transportation, other, during training)

Notes:

Query #4b
Motivators to Employment

1. What motivators regarding employment did you experience? How did you handle each of these experiences? (examples to clarify question - employment history home country, employment history Canada, responsibility for childcare, homecare, familycare, financial, scheduling, transportation, other, during training)

Notes:

Query #5
What are Your Goals and Aspirations

1. What are your employment goals and aspirations?
2. What are your educational goals and aspirations.

Notes:

Query #6
What practical strategies can you suggest, with regard to your experiences and perseverance, to new immigrant women to ease transition to employment.

1. (Suppose I was a refugee who just arrived in Edmonton, and I asked you what I should do to obtain training. What would you tell me?)

2. What information or assistance or contacts would you offer new Canadian immigant women?

3. How can your experiences help future immigrant women settling in Edmonton.
   (examples to clarify question - within the family, religiously, socially, in education, in employment)

4. What words of wisdom could you offer other immigrant women?

Notes:

Appendix 5

Group Interview Guide

Group Interview Guide

Participants:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Discuss the background and focus of the study - What have a selected group of immigrant women experienced making the transition to employment or further education through a selected private vocational office systems training program?

Discuss need for the camcorder operator and location of camcorder and tape recorder, "off the record" comments, right to stop equipment, confidentiality of tapes, reiteration of points in release of information.

Ask for a pseudonym from each participant to be used in the study.

Encourage full participation - commonalities, differences, themes, opinions, ideas, thoughts, statements.

Proceed with Individual Interview Guide

Include topics that were discussed with some participants but not all participants in the individual interviews.

1. Language (pronunciation, language in the home, alphabet, television)
2. Next friend
3. Visible minority
4. Interviews/resumes
5. Perseverance
6. Lack of information
7. Goals
8. Recommendations

Appendix 6

Original Codes

Original Codes

Code	Description	Question #
Query #1	General Characteristics	
GC-MS	Marital status	1
GC-DP	Dependents	2,3
GC-AGE	Age of participant	10
GC-IMM	Immigration	4-11
GC-FAM	Family circumstances	12-18
Query #2	Language Acquisition	
L-Learn	Learned childhood/school	1,5
L-ESL	ESL	2,4
L-Other	Other languages	3
L-Mot	Motivators (language)	6
L-Det	Deterrents (language)	6
Query #3a	Training/Education Deterrents	
TED-ED	Education (home/Canada)	1
TED-L	Language through school	1
TED-RC	Recognized credentials	1
TED-CC	Courses taken in Canada	1
TED-FAM	Family circumstances	1
TED-OTHER	Other	1
Query #3b	Training/Education Motivators	
TEM-ED	Education (home/Canada)	1
TEM-L	Language through school	1
TEM-RC	Recognized credentials	1
TEM-CC	Courses taken in Canada	1
TEM-FAM	Family circumstances	1
TEM-OTHER	Other	1
Query #4a	Employment Deterrents	
ED-WHH	Work history (home)	1
ED-WHC	Work history (Canada)	1
ED-FAM	Family circumstances	1
ED-OTHER	Other	1
Query #4b	Employment Motivators	
EM-WHH	Work history (home)	1
EM-WHC	Work history (Canada)	1
EM-FAM	Family circumstances	1
EM-OTHER	Other	1
Query #5	Goals & Aspirations	
G-EM	Employment goals	1
G-ED	Education goals	2
Query #6	Practical Suggestions	
PS-TE	Training and education	1
PS-C	Contacts	2
PS-Help	Help for immigrant women	3
PS-WW	Words of wisdom	4

Appendix 7

Revised Codes

Revised Codes

Code	Description	Question #
Query #1	General Characteristics	
MS	Marital status	1
Child	Children	2
Dep	Dependents	3
Age	Age of participant	10
I	Immigration	4-11
Fam	Family circumstances	12-18
Born	Birthdate of participant	
Query #2	Language Acquisition	
English	English & other language info	1-6
Query #3a	Training/Education Deterrents	
Query #3b	Training/Education Motivators	
Ed	Education Deterrents & Motivators	1
Query #4a	Employment Deterrents	
Query #4b	Employment Motivators	
Employ	Employment Deterrents & Motivators	1
Query #5	Goals & Aspirations	
Goals	Employment and Education goals	1-2
Query #6	Practical Suggestions	
Sug	Suggestions, words wisdom, etc.	1-4
Other		
Dif	Differences	
Age Dif	Age difficulties	
Con	Confidence	
Day Care	Day care	
Dis	Discrimination	
Home	Homesickness	
Next	Next friend	
Now	Participant presently doing	
Problems	Problem areas discussion	
Resume	Resume discussion	
Background	Participant's background	
Ref	Referred to courses/employment by	
Det	Deterrents general	
Mot	Motivators general	
Other	Miscellaneous	

Appendix 8

Heading Codes

Heading Codes	
Ages	Emigration, Training, Employment, As younger/older worker.
Families	Extended, nuclear, Head of household.
Status, Dependents, Financial Responsibilities	
Emigration	When, how, from, why.
Homesickness	Family, friends, environment, adj
Dealing with Differences	
English	ESL, Comprehension pronunciation, Alphabet, Television, Language spoken in home, Questions, Dreams.
Education	English, Scheduling, Credentials, Government assistance, Programs, Females in education, Recommendations.
Employment	Discrimination, Confidence, English/education, past experience, Interviews/resumes,
English/Education/Employment - Deterrents/motivators	
Lack of information, Assistance for Others, Problems might encounter, Suggestions, Goals, Practical suggestions confidence, background, Other	

Headings Emerged from Original, Revised and Heading Codes	
Characteristics of Participants	
Influences	Cultural, Family
Handicapped	Homesickness, Loss of identity
Needs	English, Education, Employment
English/Education/Employment	
Motivation	
Goals and Aspirations	
Information Poverty	
Perseverence	

Appendix 9

Memos and Reflective Remarks

Memos

Date:

Key Concepts?

Anchors?

Thoughts?

Ideas?

Missing Data?

Patterns or Themes?

Reflective Remarks

Date:

Commonalities?

Differences?

Explanations?

Assumptions?

Findings?

Other?